THE CONCEPT OF THE MOTHER GODDESS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE: THE FEMININE PRINCIPLE FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY, THE HINDU TANTRA,

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CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF ASIAN STUDIES, PH.D., 1977

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THE CONCEPT OF THE MOTHER GODDESS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE: THE FEMININE PRINCIPLE FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY, THE HINDU TANTRA, AND CHRISTIANITY

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the California Institute
of Asian Studies

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Religion

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by
Kathleen Joan McLaughlin
November 1976

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read THE CONCEPT OF THE MOTHER GODDESS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE: THE FEMININE PRINCIPLE FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY, THE HINDU TANTRA, AND CHRISTIANITY by Kathleen Joan McLaughlin, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Religion degree at the California Institute of Asian Studies.

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Chapter 1

PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

In Western culture the power that religion once had in people's lives has been eclipsed by an almost "religious" devotion to scientific, materialistic, and empirical principles. Both Judeo-Christian religion and modern science express a certain type of consciousness which is based on rational, logical, hierarchical, and discriminating principles and symbolized by a masculine deity who is worshipped as Father, Lord, King, and Judge. The women of Western culture have been excluded from the religious hierarchy and the feminine principle has been excluded from conceptualizations and images of the Divine. One result of this has been that the masculine has been deified and the feminine profanized on the symbolic, theological, and psychological levels as well as on political, economic, and social levels. As Erich Neumann points out:

> . . . this modern consciousness is threatening the existence of Western mankind, for the one-sidedness of masculine development has led to a hypertrophy of consciousness at the expense of the whole man.[1]

Theologians of every religious tradition would surely

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[1]Erich Neumann, The Great Mother, trans. Ralph Manheim, Bollingen Series XLVII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 57.

agree that the Divine actually transcends all sexual differentiation; however, a masculine image of God has led to the belief that God is male, and Jesus' maleness has often been emphasized before his humanity. When males predominantly define and create a culture, the feminine is always seen as inferior, for in the male the feminine is a subordinate element, as in the female the masculine is subordinate. The dominance of masculine consciousness in the West has led to male-defined femininity resulting in a poverty of religious symbols, a distortion of attitudes, conceptualizations and images concerning the Divine, and a proliferation of limited or negative symbols of the feminine. If the real nature of the Divine is transsexual, then full consciousness of the Divine would express itself in both masculine and feminine symbols, and would be manifested in both men and women. As Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote many years ago:

> The first step in the elevation of woman to her true position, as an equal factor in human progress, is the cultivation of the religious sentiment in regard to her dignity and equality, the recognition by the rising generation of an ideal Heavenly Mother, to whom their prayers should be addressed, as well as to a Father.[2]

Statement of the Problem

Since women can not reach their fullest potentialities as long as they are excluded, as a sex, from the symbolism of the Divine nature, it is necessary to ask the question of

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[2]Elizabeth Cady Stanton and others, The Woman's Bible (Seattle: Coalition Task Force on Women and Religion, 1974), p. 14.

what the Divine Feminine really is. How may She be symbolized? This question cannot be answered through an examination of Judeo-Christian symbols and myths alone, for they are fundamentally distorted by a one-sided patriarchal bias. This dissertation, therefore, focuses on an examination of feminine symbols of the Divine from a cross-cultural perspective with the aim of bringing feminine symbols to consciousness and thereby allowing a fuller, richer, more integrated realization of the Divine nature. The purpose of this study is threefold: 1) To determine what the whole nature of the feminine archetype is, with the help of Jungian concepts of depth-psychology. This will be accomplished through a comparative study of the feminine archetype in primitive and classical mythology and the Hindu Tantra. 2) To examine the Christian concept of the feminine in the light of the feminine archetype, thereby illuminating the nature of the patriarchal bias. 3) To point towards a symbology of the Feminine Divine on the basis of East-West, cross-cultural religious experience which will aid both women and men to realize this aspect of the Divine and thereby become more whole, integrated, and individuated beings.

Importance of the Study

The unbalanced overdevelopment of masculine or patriarchal consciousness has led the western world into a state of technological, ecological, and political crisis, seen in the massive social phenomena of racism, imperialism, and sexism. These diseases are rapidly spreading to Eastern civilizations

along with the beneficial products of scientific technology. Technology has brought with its many labor-saving devices and effective birth control techniques the opportunity for women to be freed from biological bonds which have limited their psychic-spiritual and cultural growth in the past. Many women in the West are using these opportunities and male culture is reacting with fear and apprehension. An articulation of the feminine principle with both its dangers and its profound spiritual aspects could alleviate the disruption of a sudden arousal of previously unconscious aspects of the psyche, as the feminine is in patriarchal culture.

> . . . It is possible that when a culture refuses to visualize the dangerous mothers, men then become vaguely afraid of all women, and finally of the entire feminine side of their own personalities.[3]

The feminine symbols expressed in Western patriarchal culture have been either unrealistically idealistic, e.g., the Virgin Mary, or seductively degraded, e.g., Eve. The spiritual and philosophical qualities of the feminine archetype, e.g., Her compassionate and undiscriminating mother-love, Her positive valuation of the body, earth, and matter, and Her intuition of the interconnecting process of birth-death-rebirth, needs to be expressed in and to patriarchal culture which has focused on the justice and righteousness of the masculine archetype, searching for immortality beyond this life rather than within it and thereby devaluing the ever-changing world process of the Goddess. This study therefore speaks to both the spiritual

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[3]Robert Bly, Sleepers Joining Hands (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 43.

and cultural dimensions of modern consciousness.

> . . . But this problem of the Feminine has equal importance for the psychologist of culture, who recognizes that the peril of present-day mankind springs in large part from the one-sidedly patriarchal development of the male intellectual consciousness, which is no longer kept in balance by the matriarchal world of the psyche. In this sense of the exposition of the archetypal-psychical world of the Feminine that we have attempted in our work is also a contribution to a future therapy of culture.[4]

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

There are certain terms used in this study which may carry ambivalent meanings in the reader's mind. Such terms as matriarchy, patriarchy, masculine, feminine, myth, and symbol may have connotations not intended here, since these are popular as well as technical terms. Matriarchy, for example, is often understood as referring to a period of social organization in which women dominated the governmental and cultural affairs and oppressed men in the same way that men oppress women in the patriarchy. However, archaeological and anthropological evidence suggests that this was not the case. Matriarchal societies were characterized by a cooperative style of ruling in which there was no obeisance of one sex to another, but in which women were honored as not only the biological mothers, creators of new life, but also as the social mothers, prime producers of the necessities of life, i.e., food, clothing, shelter. Patriarchy indicates a social state which is hierarchically ordered and dominated by men and is based on the suppression of women, as well as any other people

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[4]Neumann, p. xiii.

outside the male ruling group. However, the author is not focusing here on a sociological, economic, or political issue but is using these terms primarily to indicate psychic stages. Matriarchy, then, indicates a psychic state in which the Great Mother archetype contains masculine ego consciousness, while patriarchy indicates a state in which masculine consciousness has separated itself and is firmly established in a position opposite to, and independent of, the feminine unconscious.

Masculine and feminine are used to express the principle of opposites in the psyche. Other symbols, such as light-dark, up-down, good-evil, etc., also express these polarities. Within each human psyche both principles are present, so a female person is both masculine and feminine, as is a male. Consciousness, then, of the feminine principle is necessary for the growth of both female and male persons, and the cultural devaluation of the feminine has crippled both females and males, though in different ways.

Mythology is not to be understood in this study in the rationalistic pseudo-historical context which defines it as an imaginative story invented to explain that which is not or cannot be known. Mythology is not unverified or inadequate history, but is to be seen here as the unconscious self-delineation of the growth of consciousness in the human psyche. Mythology is an organization of images which express something of the meaning or sense of life which cannot be fully expressed in rational thought. It emerges from a psychic depth which precedes ego consciousness, both in time, e.g.,

an individual's or a culture's infancy, and in depth.

Mythology is expressed in symbols or images, not in rational argument. Symbols are energetic expressions which compel our unconscious participation and have both a life-giving and life-enhancing effect. They are transformers of energy, providing a vehicle through which undifferentiated instinctual energy emerges to consciousness in the form of pictures, images, etc. Symbols cannot be fully explained in rational language any more than mythology can, for they both grasp and affect the viewer at unconscious levels.

There are various other terms which will be defined or explained in the chapters in which they appear. Therefore, Jungian terms such as archetype, collective unconscious, anima, animus, elementary and transformative feminine character, will be discussed in chapter 3. Tantric terms such as śakti, kuṇḍalinī, sādhanā, mantra, maithuna will be discussed in chapter 5.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE DISSERTATION

Since the purpose of this study is to develop a clear descriptive statement of the nature of the archetypal feminine and then to compare this with the Judeo-Christian concept of the feminine, a multidimensional and interdisciplinary approach has been necessary. By means of descriptive and comparative analysis differing types of information have been synthesized with a single aim. The concept of the archetypal feminine has been hidden in almost all patriarchal religious and mythological knowledge systems, so it has been necessary

to ferret out and piece together the unconscious feminine from psychological, mythological, theological, anthropological, and archeological disciplines, while not discussing any one of these disciplines in its entirety. Examples have been chosen in order to show the breadth and depth of the feminine, not with the aim of being argumentative or exhaustive.

The remainder of the work will be organized in the following manner. Chapter 2 will give a brief review of significant literature on the subject. Chapter 3 will focus on a psychological analysis of the archetypal feminine from the point of view of Jungian depth-psychology, in order to provide a framework for comparison of symbols from varied sources. Chapter 4 presents the primitive concept of the Goddess, revealing not only the antiquity of worship of the feminine, but also the first symbolization of archetypal motifs which appear over and over in many guises. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the Hindu Tantric concept and symbology of the Goddess, providing an indepth study of one of the most highly sophisticated philosophical and devotional understandings of the feminine divinity. Chapter 5 focuses on the teachings of the Śākta Tantras, and chapter 6 focuses on a particular Tantric text, the Devī-Māhātmyam. A summary and focusing of the symbols of the archetypal feminine is given in chapter 7 that will aid in comparison with the Judeo-Christian concept. Chapter 8 examines the orthodox Christian view of the feminine which is split into the two figures of Eve and Mary. Chapter 9 compares these orthodox figures then with their archetypal background. And

chapter 10 points toward the development of conscious symbols of the feminine spiritual nature which can aid in rectifying patriarchal distortions of the Divine.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

The concept of the feminine in religion has not been a topic which has generated specific interest until recently. Although many sources have been used as background for this dissertation, there are none that deal with all the elements woven together here. In the light of patriarchal consciousness, certain issues are obscured, treated as irrelevant or taboo, or simply ignored. This has been the fate of the feminine. Until the nineteenth century the long matriarchal era which preceded the patriarchal period was not recognized as even existing, and many scholars today would still ignore or belittle its importance. Since most scholars have been men, questions of woman's history, psychology, or identity have not seemed of great significance to them. Or when accounts have been written, they have written of women as seen by men, and this has often proved to be more male fantasy than objective analysis. It has not been until quite recently that women have been expressing their own views for themselves. This dissertation is one attempt in this direction. The sources which have proved relevant and helpful will be briefly discussed here in four categories: historical/theological, psychological, mythological, and Tantric.

The epochal historical works on the feminine of the

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are Myth, Religion, and Mother Right by J. J. Bachofen[1] and The Mothers by Robert Briffault.[2] Bachofen's work which came out in the 1860's was the first to document the pre-patriarchal era of Mother Right, as he called it. However, he judged matriarchal values as material and inferior to the subsequent development of patriarchy.

> Bachofen's understanding remains strangely limited by patriarchal-Christian conceptions. Dazzled by his fundamental discovery of the development from the matriarchal to the patriarchal and from the lunar to the solar, he never arrived at a full understanding of the matriarchal spirit, which he devaluates as material and lunar. This view is just as understandable and just as much to be rejected as the corresponding psychological view that subordinates the unconscious to consciousness. In both cases, which are essentially identical, we have before us two systems, the later of which (sun, patriarchate, consciousness) cannot exist without the earlier (moon, matriarchate, unconscious) and neither of which exhausts the ultimate possibilities of transformation.[3]

Briffault's massive work of over one and a half million words focused on matriarchal society with its varied forms of marriage relationships, its lunar deities, and its priestesses. He weaves data from multitudinous sources into a vast and illuminating picture, but his work is marred by sweeping generalizations and statements that seem to be aimed at shocking

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[1] J. J. Bachofen, Myth, Religion, and Mother Right, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

[2] Robert Briffault, The Mothers, Gordon Rattray Taylor, ed. (Abridged Edition, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1959).

[3] Erich Neumann, The Great Mother, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 54, footnote.

the unimaginative out of their preconceptions. He weakens his case by claiming too much.

The most carefully reasoned and documented works on the matriarchal period are very recent works by two women scholars. Evelyn Reed's Woman's Evolution[4] carefully and clearly traces the development of society from its cannibalistic origins to the communal matriarchy and its corresponding male fratriarchy to the take-over of the patriarchy and the father-family. This is an excellent, well-documented and intriguing book on the origins of society from a feminist anthropologist. Marija Gimbutas' Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe[5] describes in great detail and with many illustrations the archaeological data from 7000-3500 B. C. in eastern Europe which evidences myth and cultic beliefs and practices. Her data points out the predominance and sophistication of goddess images and symbols throughout this period.

Two works which deal with the Christian history of the feminine are Mary Daly's The Church and the Second Sex[6] and a collection of essays edited by Rosemary R. Ruether, Religion and Sexism.[7] Daly speaks particularly of the

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4Evelyn Reed, Woman's Evolution from Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family (New York: Pathfinder Press, Inc., 1975).

5Marija Gimbutas, The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe 7000-3500 B. C. Myths, Legends and Cult Images (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

6Mary Daly, The Church and the Second Sex (2d ed.; New York: Harper Colophon, 1975).

7Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed., Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974).

position of women in the Catholic Church, but her chapters on the ancient and medieval Christian traditional views of women are excellently researched and documented. Her introduction to the second edition is a delightfully humorous and devastatingly acute criticism of her own work. The essays collected by Ruether on Jewish and Christian doctrines and images of women are very scholarly and well researched, and yet passionate in their commitment to the liberation not only of women but of Christianity from its patriarchal bonds.

The main psychological works utilized in this study are clearly those of Carl Jung and Erich Neumann. Jung's insights into the nature of the collective unconscious and its archetypes and his delineation of the anima, animus, and shadow are expressed in many of his works. Some that have been found very helpful here are The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious[8] and Two Essays on Analytical Psychology.[9] Neumann's monumental work on The Great Mother[10] is invaluable in any study of the feminine in psychology and mythology. His analysis of the feminine archetype is profound, fully illustrated both in story and picture, therefore offering the reader not only intellectual constructs but visual images as

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[8] Carl Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Collected Works, Vol. 9, i (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).

[9] Carl Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Meridian Books, 1956).

[10] Neumann.

well. Irene Claremont de Castillejo points out one of Neumann's most significant contributions:

> It is . . . to Neumann, more than to anyone else, that we owe the realization that the consciousness which has been so hardly won by man over the centuries, liberating his mind from the primal unity of things, is not the only kind of consciousness. There is also a more diffuse awareness which is yet far removed from a state of unconscious mist, and cannot be called unconsciousness. Neumann calls this 'matriarchal consciousness' as distinct from the patriarchal consciousness of man's world.[11]

This book is not, however, a book for beginners, for it requires some previous comprehension of Jungian psychology and background in mythology in order to keep from being overwhelmed. He also does not deal as much with Christian examples as with Egyptian and South American.

There are several excellent books on feminine psychology written by contemporary women Jungian analysts, many of whom studied with Jung, which deserve more than the brief mention of title given here. M. Esther Harding has two marvellous books which are more accessible to the beginner than either Jung's or Neumann's. The Way of All Women[12] describes feminine psychology in a modern context and Woman's Mysteries[13] focuses on the mythological image of the Moon Goddess in her threefold aspects and her significance in the unconscious of

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[11]Irene Claremont de Castillejo, Knowing Woman, A Feminine Psychology (New York: Harper Colophon, 1974).

[12]M. Esther Harding, The Way of All Women (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1970).

[13]M. Esther Harding, Woman's Mysteries Ancient and Modern (New York: Bantam Books, 1971).

women today. Irene Claremont de Castillejo's Knowing Woman[14] is a remarkable work which is both simply written and insightful in her analysis of feminine psychology. Marie Louise von Franz has traced the images of the feminine in medieval and modern people in The Feminine in Fairytales.[15] Ann Belford Ulanov gives a thorough account of the place of the feminine in Jungian psychology and relates this to the divine-human relationship as seen in Christianity in a most interesting way in The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and Christian Theology.[16]

The major mythological work which has proved invaluable in this study is the four-volume Masks of God by Joseph Campbell.[17] He traces the roots and development of mythology all over the world, focusing on its spiritual and inner psychological meaning, but grounding his theses firmly in historical, archaeological, and anthropological data. Although Campbell's writing style is often gentler and more poetic than Neumann's, he demands of the reader the same kind of extensive background in almost every area of human culture. He gives considerable attention to mythologies and symbols

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[14]de Castillejo.

[15]Marie Louise von Franz, Problems of the Feminine in Fairytales (New York: Spring Publications, 1972).

[16]Ann Belford Ulanov, The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and Christian Theology (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1971).

[17]Joseph Campbell, Masks of God, 4 vols. (New York: Viking Press, 1959-68).

of the matriarchal era, but this is only one theme among many in what he calls the single symphony of human development.

The greatest and most well known scholar, translator of Tantric texts into English, and interpretor of the Tantras, to India as well as the West, is Sir John Woodroffe, alias Arthur Avalon. Woodroffe wrote many books on Tantra, all characterized by his painstaking and thorough exploration of Tantric literature, philosophy, and religious practice. He edited and translated many texts previously not available in English; but he also was associated with some great Tantric pandits in Bengal, enabling him to write of the deeper meaning of the Tantras with some understanding. Śakti and Śākta[18] was the most valuable of his works for this study, consisting of various lectures giving a doctrinal, ritual, and historical overview of the Śākta Tantras. His Hymns to the Goddess[19] is a collection of hymns from various sources, praising Devī in Her many forms. The Serpent Power[20] is a translation and commentary on two important texts on Kuṇḍalinī, or the manifestation of Śakti in the individual human body.

For the chapter on the Devī-Māhātmyam four translations

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[18]Sir John Woodroffe, Śakti and Śākta (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1918).

[19]Sir John Woodroffe, Hymns to the Goddess (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1973).

[20]Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe), The Serpent Power, Being the Ṣaṭ-cakra-nirūpana and Pādukā-Pañcaka (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1974).

have been utilized. The translation of Swami Jagadīśvarānanda,[21] of the Ramakrishna Math, gives the Sanskrit text as well as English translation but without introduction or commentary. S. Shankaranarayanam,[22] a devotee of Sri Aurobindo, gives Sanskrit and English but includes related Vedic texts and a long introduction. F. E. Pargiter,[23] a judge in the Indian Civil Service includes the Devi-Mahatmyam in his translation of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, with a brief introduction to the entire Purāṇa and extensive notes. Vasudeva Agrawala[24] of Banaras Hindu University also gives Sanskrit and English with introduction, extensive notes, and two Vedic Sūktas on the Goddess.

There are many other books which have been helpful in this study. These books have been briefly reviewed here, since they have influenced the author the most in her reflection and formulation of the topic. It may, however, be reiterated that no single book or author has been found who considers the variety of elements that will be explored in the present study, although each has offered valuable insights.

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[21] Swami Jagadīśvarānanda, trans. The Devī-Māhātmyam or Śrī Durgā-Saptaśatī (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1972).

[22] S. Shankaranarayanam, trans., Glory of the Divine Mother (Devī-Māhātmyam) (Pondicherry: Dipti Publications, 1968).

[23] F. Eden Pargiter, trans. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa (Delhi: Indological Book House, 1969).

[24] Vasudeva S. Agrawala, trans. The Glorification of the Great Goddess (Varanasi, India: All-India Kashiraj Trust, 1963).

Chapter 3

JUNGIAN CONCEPT OF THE FEMININE

In undertaking a venture such as this journey through many cultures and many periods of time, many mythologies and interpreters of these images, it is wise to have a map in hand. A few terms or concepts, a cognitive framework on which to arrange the concepts gathered from the ocean floor. Before one undertakes a voyage into the underworld as Ishtar did, it is wise to leave a friend in heaven to remind those above that one is missing. It is for this purpose that a psychological analysis of the feminine will be discussed in this chapter. The intent is not to review the various psychological theories about women, nor to compare and contrast their differences, nor to develop a new theory. The intent here is simply to delineate some concepts and themes which will serve as Ariadne's thread to guide the conscious mind through the mythological labyrinth of the Goddess' webs.

In an overall look at the psychology of the feminine, three main views emerge: biological, cultural, and symbolic. The biological view may be identified with Freud, propounding the dictum that "anatomy is destiny," but this is also the view of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Here, the psychology of the feminine is seen to arise solely on the basis of female physiology. For Freud, woman is most obviously determined by what she lacks--a phallus. In the cultural view,

represented most ably by Karen Horney and Margaret Mead, it is not physiology which determines psychology, but sociology. Here, femininity is nothing inherent, but is solely the result of socialization processes in which a female person learns what it is and how to be feminine. This perspective is characteristic of both Marxism and anthropology, suggesting that there are no real differences between men and women, only those which society creates. However, the Marxists pioneered in articulating the existence of matriarchy and its values.

The symbolic view, on the other hand, does not identify the feminine solely with women, much less simply as the result of biological data or cultural processes. The symbolic view, as expressed by Carl Jung, sees the feminine as an element of the psyche. The feminine is a principle, perhaps like an inner law or essence, but in any case, a primary source inherent in the nature of things.

> . . . For Jung and his symbolic approach, the feminine and its psychology describe, point to, and symbolize certain aspects of psychic or spiritual reality.[1]

It is not that Jung precisely defines the feminine in a systematic way; but he pays serious attention to it as a psychic mode of being. In fact, as shall become apparent, it is not possible to "define" the feminine in its most essential or archetypal nature; but it is possible to describe the symbols and myths which express the feminine. Much of this

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[1]Ann Bedford Ulanov, The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p. 142.

dissertation is based on a consideration of these myths and symbols in an attempt to distill some of the Mother's wine which can intoxicate and transform consciousness, rather than simply draw lines, define, and delineate it.

Jung points to the biological fact of human contrasexuality, that 'x' and 'y' chromosomes combine in an embryo to determine its sex, as parallel to psychic contrasexuality. This means that each person contains masculine and feminine elements in his/her psyche, regardless of one's external physical sex. Woman is indeed different from man, but in no way inferior. In the unconscious of each woman exists something masculine, as something feminine lives within each man. Jung postulates that "personal wholeness" can only be found through a full awareness of contrasexuality, and a balancing of the pairs of opposites. The feminine and masculine are among the most important symbols of the polarities or pairs of opposites which compose the universe. They are archetypal principles of the psyche whose polarity and complementarities are seen in the interaction between the sexes in the external world, and in the interaction of the ego with its contrasexual element in the internal world.

It is necessary at this point to take a brief look at the nature of the psyche as Jung describes it, in order to comprehend the significance of the feminine aspect. The psyche is composed of three levels of awareness: consciousness, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious. Another way to describe these distinctions is to speak of consciousness and the personal unconscious as the

subjective psyche, and the collective unconscious as the objective psyche. The former exists differently within each individual, unique being; but the latter is shared by all beings. It is humanity's common root. The personality is directed and motivated by libido or psychic energy which is the dynamism of the life process expressed in the psychic sphere. Libido operates according to two laws: conservation of energy and the law of opposites. Conservation of energy means that even while libido energy is being transformed or displaced, it is not destroyed. If energy in one person or thing decreases, then it will increase in some other area, e.g., if consciousness of the feminine is repressed the feminine will not disappear but will become unconscious. For the psyche is a self-regulating system which is structured in polarities. This reflects the law of opposites, since energy constellates itself as opposites. It is in fact the tension that arises within these polarities that is the source of the psyche's energy.

> The polar structure of the psyche is significant for our interest in the feminine because images of masculine-feminine polarity frequently symbolize all the other psychic polarities, especially in decisive periods of growth when there is a struggle to unite opposites.[2]

The energy of the psyche flows with form and direction, focusing around certain energy points which actually constitute the structure of the psyche. Undigested or conflicting elements congregate around these energy points or

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[2]Ulanov, p. 27.

"feeling-toned groups of representations" which Jung terms "complexes." That is, various feelings, experiences, and images are bound together so that when one feeling of a complex is stimulated, the other feelings also arise, along with certain images or behaviors. This does not occur on a conscious level; rather one is gripped by a feeling which one may not wish to experience at all. It is not only that one has a complex, but, as Jung puts it, complexes have us. Psychic energy is then blocked within these complexes and not available to the conscious mind or the ego, so, for example, the ego may have a great deal of work to do but is drained by a feeling of depression. An individual's or a culture's psychic energy is locked within a negative mother complex which ensnares and entraps with a black depression. This energy can be freed only through emotional assimilation of the contents of the complex, i.e., allowing the feelings of the complex to arise to consciousness and experiencing them, confronting the negative mother. It is through the ego's confrontation or encounter with the complex that assimilation occurs, not through total unconsciousness of its existence ("I'm not depressed."), identification ("I am so depressed."), or projection ("You are making me depressed."). As Jung says,

> . . . a complex can be really overcome only if it is lived out to the full. In other words, if we are to develop further we have to draw to us and drink down to the very dregs what, because of our complexes, we have held at a distance.[3]

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[3]Carl Gustav Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, Collected Works, Vol. 9,i (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 99.

This may be compared with the Tantric path which also advocates experiencing all feelings and parts of oneself with an "equal eye." Both the Jungian and Tantric paths affirm encounter rather than the avoidance or restraint as taught in some ascetic spiritual teachings.

Complexes are of two types, depending on whether they occur in the personal or collective unconscious.

> . . . The contents of the personal unconscious are chiefly the feeling-toned complexes, as they are called; they constitute the personal and private side of psychic life. The contents of the collective unconscious, on the other hand, are known as archetypes.[4]

Archetypes then are also energy centers, nodal points, or primordial forms present in everyone's psyche whether or in whatever way they arise to consciousness. Encounters with these archetypes may be like earthquakes to consciousness, so great is the energy contained within them. They are the forms which the instincts assume, "the instinct's perception of itself," "the self-portrait of the instinct,"[5] thus having a biological base. And they are the archaic, primordial, universal images that have existed since remotest times.

A distinction must be made between the archetype-en-sich, in itself, and the images, symbols and metaphors which it produces. In itself an archetype is always unconscious, a part of the collective unconscious, which always remains

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[4]Jung, p. 4.

[5]Jolande Jacobi, Complex, Archetype, Symbol in the Psychology of C. G. Jung, trans. Ralph Manheim, Bollingen Series LVII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 36.

unconscious. Therefore, it is impossible to delineate sharply its outlines. They are imperishable but ambivalent, constantly changing shape.

> . . . archetypes are not determined as regards their content, but only as regards their form and then only to a very limited degree. A primordial image is determined as to its content only when it has become conscious and is therefore filled out with the material of conscious experience.[6]

Archetypes can be dealt with then only indirectly, in terms of the images they produce, both in projections onto the outer world, in subjective images in dreams or fantasies, or as manifest in the symptoms of complexes. Consciousness cannot make a symbol, or choose to experience an archetype. But the symbols arising from an archetype set consciousness in motion, acting as an energy transformer or a molder of consciousness. For these are not ideas in a rational, articulated sense, as are sought by patriarchal consciousness. They come from a more remote and mysterious psychic depth.

> . . . They are primordial forms that arose at a time when the conscious mind did not yet think but only perceived, when thought was still essentially revelation; not invented but imposed from within.[7]

They are what is perceived by matriarchal consciousness. It must then be reiterated that the power of archetypes will be missed or distorted by a consciousness which seeks only to define rather than experience.

> . . . The archetypal field presents a polycentric picture, a theatre of personified powers always implicating one another. The perspective that would cleanly etch out their distinct lines

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[6]Jung, p. 79. [7]Jacobi, p. 50.

> reflects the monotheistic consciousness of the scientific and philosophical approach; the perspective that would speak of them ambiguously and in images reflects the polytheistic, hermatic or anima consciousness of the psychological approach.[8]

It is possible, through the study of archetypal images, to gain some consciousness of archetypal energy patterns. There are common themes which arise again and again, e.g., Great Father, Great Mother, Hero/Heroine, Child, Maiden/Kore, Shadow, Anima, Animus, Self, etc. The focus of this dissertation is on the feminine archetypes, or more clearly, on the Archetypal Feminine. This primordial archetype emerges in a period, either individual or cultural, when the ego and consciousness are relatively undifferentiated. As consciousness begins to differentiate, the archetype undergoes what Erich Neumann calls "fragmentation of archetypes,"[9] when individual archetypes emerge and form coherent groups. The attempt here is to look at some of the predominant archetypal images of the feminine with the hope of gaining a glimpse of the all-encompassing nature of the Archetypal Feminine. But this is not a simple task.

> . . . In other words, a vast number of forms, symbols, and images, of views, aspects, and concepts, which exclude one another and overlap, which complement one another and apparently emerge independently of one another, but all of which are connected with one archetype, e.g., that of the Great Mother, pour in on the observer who takes on

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[8]James Hillman, "Anima" (II), Spring 1974 (New York City: Spring Publications, 1974), pp. 138-9.

[9]Erich Neumann, The Great Mother, trans. Ralph Manheim, Bollingen Series XLVII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 9.

> himself to describe, or even to understand, what an archetype, or what this archetype, is.[10]

In Western culture a great bias toward patriarchal consciousness has emphasized only certain symbols and images of the Archetypal Feminine, while others have been deliberately suppressed. Jung points out that the unconscious psyche always compensates for the conscious psyche, constellating images which express the other side. For, as the law of opposites makes clear, all things exist in pairs of opposites as energy takes form in images in the psyche. What is not in mind consciously, is in mind unconsciously. The aspects of the feminine archetype which have been suppressed from consciousness still operate energetically from the unconscious. For example, when God in official doctrine is pictured as totally masculine, the unconscious picture is feminine.

It is not simply, though, that symbols of the Archetypal Feminine have been suppressed, but also that they have been devalued. The type of consciousness which is viewing the symbol interprets it in a particular way, and this tendency takes form as culture. As Neumann points out:

> The accent of a symbol depends in a large measure on the matriarchal or patriarchal cultural situation in which it is embedded. In a patriarchate, for example, the mater character of the symbol materia is devaluated; matter is regarded as something of small value in contrast to the ideal--which is assigned to the male-paternal side.[11]

It will be necessary, then, to become aware of what Joseph Campbell calls the "patriarchal inversion" of myths and symbols.

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[10] Neumann, p. 9. [11] Neumann, p. 49.

The core of an archetype is represented by mythological and numinous images. These images may not be immediately apparent to an undeveloped consciousness.

> . . . For the further the archetype recedes from consciousness and the clearer the latter becomes, the more distinctly does the archetype assume mythological features.[12]

For example, an infant projects the mother archetype onto his/her own physical mother and comes to see her as a goddess. The Mother is She who envelops and protects the embryonic psyche of the child, as the womb protected the child's physical body. This "Mother" indicates the complex psychic situation of the unawakened ego, and "Great" indicates her superior character over created reality.

> . . . The child, for example, first experiences in his mother the archetype of the Great Mother, that is, the reality of an all-powerful numinous woman, on whom he is dependent in all things, and not the objective reality of his personal mother, this particular historical woman which his mother becomes for him later when his ego and consciousness are more developed.[13]

So, as consciousness develops the projection is taken back into the psyche and the mythological or symbolic character of the archetype becomes more clear. The Archetypal Feminine was worshipped for thousands of years before the delineation of the particular symbol "Great Mother" appeared.[14]

Jung lists some examples which express the depth and breadth of feminine symbols.

> . . . Many things arousing devotion or feelings of awe, as for instance the Church, university,

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[12]Jung, p. 102. [13]Neumann, p. 15 [14]Neumann, p. 11.

> city or country, heaven, earth, the woods, the sea or any still waters, matter even, the underworld and the moon, can be mother symbols. The archetype is often associated with things and places standing for fertility and fruitfulness; the cornucopia, a ploughed field, a garden. It can be attached to a rock, a cave, a tree, a spring, a deep well, or to various vessels such as the baptismal font, or to vessel-shaped flowers like the rose or the lotus. Because of the protection it implies, the magic circle or mandala can be a form of mother archetype. Hollow objects such as ovens and cooking vessels are associated with the mother archetype, and of course, the uterus, yoni, and anything of a like shape. Added to this list there are many animals, such as the cow, hare, and helpful animals in general.[15]

Thus many forms, in addition to human female forms, convey the archetype. The symbol seems to convey a certain feeling, i.e., devotion, awe, fertility, protection, from which the form takes shape. All archetypal symbols are polyvalent. They carry both a positive and negative meaning. The goddesses of fate, i.e., the Moira, Graeae, the Norns, show their ambivalence.

> . . . Evil symbols are the witch, the dragon (or any devouring and entwining animal, such as a large fish or a serpent), the grave, the sarcophagus, deep water, death, nightmares and bogies (Empusa, Lilith, etc.).[16]

The Mother archetype is both She who is good, beneficient, restoring, nurturing, and protective, as well as She who is threatening, destructive, and possessive. It is very important in a child's development, as well as in a culture's formulation that both aspects of the archetype emerge. If only the positive aspect, the Good Mother, emerges into consciousness, then the Bad Mother always threatens the ego from

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[15]Jung, p. 81 [16]Jung, pp. 81-2.

behind, expressing itself in fear of death, nightmares, sexual obsessions, or fear of women in general. Only when this aspect of the archetype is confronted and faced in its entirety can the energy contained here be made available for constructive use. And there is much of value here.

> The qualities associated with it are maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magic transformation and rebirth, together with the underworld and its inhabitants, are presided over by the mother. On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark: the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate.[17]

One could easily become lost amidst this wealth of conflicting images. Erich Neumann's structural analysis of the Archetypal Feminine, complex and animus-oriented as it is, provides some guidelines and signposts. A final word from Jung reveals the primal experience with which the Archetypal Feminine reveals herself.

> . . . This is the mother-love which is one of the most moving and unforgettable memories of our lives, the mysterious root of all growth and change; the love that means homecoming, shelter, and the long silence from which everything begins and in which everything ends. Intimately known and yet strange like Nature, lovingly tender and yet cruel like fate, joyous and untiring giver of life--mater dolorosa and mute implacable portal that closes upon the dead.[18]

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[17] Jung, p. 82. [18] Jung, p. 92.

ARCHETYPAL STRUCTURE OF THE FEMININE

Erich Neumann's monumental work, The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype, is the basic source for the structural analysis of the Feminine to be presented here. It is a vast, profound, intricate work which attempts to do something which by definition cannot be done, i.e., to consciously delineate aspects of that which is by nature unconscious. It must constantly be remembered that the categories described here are merely hints and glimpses of that which can now be seen only "through a glass darkly." They are symbolic categories, not to be taken literally, for symbolic interpretations are constantly expanding and shifting.

The Archetypal Feminine has two aspects: an elementary, static character and a transformative, dynamic character.[19] There is a tendency to preserve and a tendency to change. The elementary character may be symbolized as the Mother, giving both birth and death. The transformative character may be symbolized by the Anima, giving both inspiration and madness. Within each aspect of the Feminine there are positive and negative poles; it is not that the elementary is negative and the transformative positive or vice versa. The positive and negative poles of each aspect are very close to each other and paradoxically reverse, i.e., from madness to inspiration, birth to death, etc. This

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[19]The Archetypal Masculine also has a static and dynamic aspect. Cf. E. C. Whitmont, The Symbolic Quest (New York: C. G. Jung Foundation for Analytical Psychology, 1969), pp. 171-2.

accounts for the experience of an ego approaching one pole and suddenly shifting to the other, e.g., the terrifying and terrible experiences of deprivation and loneliness of some initiation rituals which are a prelude to visions and other inspired phenomena.

The elementary character of the feminine may be described as "a receptive, dark, ingoing, moist, enclosing, and containing world of formation that surrounds and holds fast to everything that is created within it."[20] The original symbol here may be the womb, representing the vessel character of the feminine, within which the ego, consciousness, and the individual are childlike and dependent.

> . . . The Feminine appears as great because that which is contained, sheltered, nourished, is dependent on it and utterly at its mercy.[21]

The elementary character and its symbolism express the original situation of the psyche in which the unconscious is dominant over individual contents of the psyche, e.g., ego, complexes, etc. This relates to the pre-matriarchal stage of early people when the distinction between animal and human was not clear and the instincts had control of consciousness.

The positive functions of the elementary character are bearing and releasing, containing and protecting. As long as an individual desires and needs this kind of nurturance in order to aid growth and development, symbolized in the natural growth of vegetation, then the elementary is indispensible. But when a person has outgrown the womb and needs to

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[20] Ulanov, p. 157. [21] Neumann, p. 43.

break connections with the old and explore the new, then the elementary's negative functions are experienced, i.e., fixating, holding fast and ensnaring, symbolized as captivity.

> . . . This term indicates that the individual who is no longer in the original and natural situation of childlike containment experiences the attitude of the Feminine as restricting and hostile.[21]

Other symbols are the net, noose, spider, octapus, and witch, that which binds and devours, leading to death. But this is not always negative, as protecting is not always positive. The Buddhist sees birth as the cause of death and so does not always rejoice, while he/she may welcome the conscious experience of pain which will lead to insight into the illusion of craving for pleasure which causes suffering. Also, the bearing and releasing function of birth may be experienced by the infant as rejection from the uterine paradise and therefore felt as negative, while it is an intrinsic part of growth, the positive elementary.

Whether positive or negative, the elementary is experienced as the Great Round, symbolized by the unity of life amidst constantly changing seasons of birth and death, spring and fall.

> As elementary character we designate the aspect of the Feminine that as the Great Round, the Great Container, tends to hold fast to everything that springs from it and to surround it like an eternal substance. Everything born of it belongs to it and remains subject to it; and even if the individual becomes independent, the Archetypal Feminine relativizes this independence into a nonessential variant of her own perpetual being.[22]

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[21]Neumann, p. 43. [22]Neumann, p. 25.

This sense of the Great Round leads to the natural wisdom and sadness of the matriarchate, the tragic aspect of transcience caused by growth and transformation. Change is always occurring, it is the only constant, and so that which is within the Great Round can never be held onto or grasped. That which is born always dies. This is the tragic aspect. But the elementary character always bends everything that changes and is changed back into its own eternal sameness, into the One, the eternal source of the Many. This is its wisdom.

> . . . In this phase the Archetypal Feminine not only bears and directs life as a whole, and the ego in particular, but also takes everything that is born of it back into its womb of origination and death.[23]

The elementary character also suggests a certain process of consciousness which can easily be recognized in men and women.

> The phenomenon of psychic gravitation, i.e., the natural inertia that causes certain contents of the unconscious to remain unconscious and certain contents of consciousness to become unconscious--taken together with the symbolic phenomenon of the predominant femininity of the unconscious in its relation to consciousness--forms the foundation of what we call the 'elementary character of the Feminine.'[24]

It is Jung's and Neumann's observation that the active ego consciousness is symbolized as male, and the unconscious in its many aspects is symbolized as female, in people of both sexes.[25] So the pull of psychic gravitation is an expression

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[23] Neumann, p. 30. [24] Neumann, p. 28. [25] Neumann, p. 28.

of the elemental feminine regardless of the psyche in which it occurs, as is nurturing and the development of consciousness. This identification of consciousness with the masculine may be rankling to some, but it must be made clear that this is a symbolic process present in both men and women, i.e., men are not more "naturally" conscious as men, and women more "naturally" unconscious. Though it does seem that woman's biological role as childbearer keeps her in touch with unconsciousness, natural processes which men often lose touch with, abstract and theorize about.[26] But the rankling comes from the higher value which patriarchal culture places on ego consciousness, as if it were the most significant or redeeming element of the psyche. Patriarchal consciousness views the "unconscious" with fear and trembling, seeing it all as dark, chaotic, and foreboding. However, as any artistic person knows, the essential element of creation is that spark of inspiration from the unconscious. There are varying modes of the unconscious which contain hidden treasures, but they must be valued before they can be explored. It is in this sense that the unconscious, the source of consciousness, expresses itself in feminine images.

The transformative aspect of the feminine emphasizes the dynamic aspect of the psyche which urges, lures, and drives toward motion, change, and transformation. It is that aspect which draws one out of oneself, the divine madness of

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[26]Emma Jung, Animus & Anima (New York City: Spring Publications, 1957), p. 64.

the soul which fascinates and draws the ego to venture forth into expanded realms. It is the source of all inspirations and revelations and indeed primitive peoples "obtained their essential orientation from the intuitive faculty of the feminine nature.[27] This accounts for the early numbers of priestesses, down to the Delphic oracle, as well as for the fact that not only do male shamans dress as women, but even Catholic priests wear women's garb.

In psychological development, the elementary conservative aspect occurs first but:

> . . . The transformative character is already clearly at work in the basic function of the Maternal-Feminine, in the gestation as well as the bearing of children.[28]

It is clear that these aspects are not as separate as a conceptual analysis might suggest. In the feminine experience of childbearing both elemental and transformative are expressed. The woman is both the container of the embryo and the instrument of her own transformation and that of her child.

> . . . First and foremost the woman experiences her transformative character naturally and unreflectingly in pregnancy, in her relationship to the growth of her child and in childbearing.[29]

Other transformation symbols include the growing fruit, a seed becoming an ear of corn, a caterpillar becoming a butterfly, and a woman's belly as a chemical retort or transforming kiln.[30] This transformation is from the bottom up, or from the inside out; it is not a free-flowing rootless process of

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[27] Neumann, p. 73. [28] Neumann, p. 29. [29] Neumann, p. 31.
[30] Ulanov, p. 160.

change as the male intellect sees it. The most numinous of transformation mysteries is that of growth. The most important mysteries of the feminine are symbolized by earth which is the creative aspect of the feminine, holding the secret of original conception and generation on which all life is based.

The transformative character is expressed quite clearly in what Neumann calls the transformation mysteries.

> The transformation mysteries of the woman are primarily blood-transformation mysteries that lead her to the experience of her own creativity and produce a numinous impression on the man.[31]

The three most significant mysteries are menstruation, pregnancy, and lactation. In the primitive view a child was made of blood, the menstrual blood which had mysteriously ceased to flow until suddenly a child was born. This implies that menstrual blood has great power and is indeed sacred, since it is the essential life fluid. Somehow, within the sacred vessel of the woman's body, this blood is mysteriously transformed into a human infant. After birth, another mystery occurs and this same mysterious body produces milk. Blood is again transformed, now into milk, the primal food transformation mystery.

The cultivation and cooking of foods is a feminine transformation mystery. It is this mystery which underlies the Catholic Mass in which grass becomes grain which is transformed into the Host.

> . . . The conspicuous and characteristic factor of the matriarchal transformation mysteries

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[31]Neumann, p. 31.

> is that they always remain 'incorporate,' i.e., in some way connected with matter.[32]

This materiality is not a negative quality, not a "lower" form as Bachofen repeatedly states, but an essential factor of the mystery, as all creation has a material nature. Neumann, in fact, points to the creation of human culture as just such a manifestation of the primordial mysteries of the feminine:

> . . . In all such forms of mystery, as for example, the preparation of food and drink, the fashioning of garments, vessels, the house, material things and things transformed by nature are subjected to a higher mode of transformation by human intervention.[33]

And at each stage the grain, the bread, the blood must die to its existing form in order to be transformed into a new form. As a maiden dies at the moment of impregnation in order to be transformed into a mother, so the symbol of rebirth always relates to a feminine transformation mystery. These mysteries are particularly important to note because, although continuing a male-female dichotomy, they help to reevaluate the devalued feminine of patriarchal culture.

The final element which must be discussed in this brief structural analysis of the feminine ought to be considered as part of the transformative character. As Neumann says:

> The anima is the vehicle par excellence of the transformative character. It is the mover, the instigator of change, whose fascination drives, lures, and encourages the male to all the adventures

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[32]Neumann, p. 60. [33]Neumann, p. 59.

> of the soul and spirit, of action and creation in the inner and the outward world.[34]

However, the anima, either by herself or in relationship with her masculine counterpart, animus, is such an immense and important subject that an entire chapter could easily focus on her alone. The matter is further complicated by her nature as part of a syzygy which always leads her to be seen in counterbalance to other things and not as herself alone.

> Because the fantasy of opposites keeps the anima in a social tandem with either the persona or the shadow and in a sexual tandem with masculinity, we neglect her phenomenology _per se_ and so find it difficult to understand her except in distinction to these other notions (masculinity, shadow, animus, persona).[35]

Jung speaks of syzygy as a divinely conjuncted pair: One is never separated from the Other. The anima-animus, feminine-masculine, syzygy is only one among many possible pairs of opposites. As has been shown, the psyche is structured in pairs of opposites, both of which are always present, unconsciously if not consciously. "The archetypal perspective of the syzygy will always perceive events in compensatory pairings."[36] The anima is always viewed through an opposite. She is always in relationship so there is no vantage point on either aspect except through the other. "To be engaged with anima is to be engaged simultaneously with animus in

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[34]Neumann, p. 33.

[35]Hillman, _Spring 1973_, p. 101.

[36]Hillman, _Spring 1974_, p. 139.

some way or other."[37] In fact, Neumann's argument that the development of ego consciousness in both men and women is essentially a masculine process, or protest, out of the feminine unconscious is based on this experience of inner syzygy. For this animus-anima syzygy has two meanings: there is syzygy between two persons in interpersonal relationships and there is syzygy of anima-animus within any person as an intrapersonal relationship. Ramifications of the former will not be dealt with here, constituting a vast subject of its own. The projections and relationships occurring between different parts of the psyche, the internal people of one's life, however, bring light to this study of images of the divine, for where is this divine presence felt most directly but within the psyche, within one's deepest heart?

> . . . Together they form a divine pair, one of whom, in accordance with his Logos nature, is characterized by pneuma and nous, rather like Hermes with his ever-shifting hues, while the other, in accordance with her Eros nature, wears the features of Aphrodite, Helen (Selene), Persephone, and Hecate.[38]

It is necessary to look more closely at the description of anima, for already a question has arisen. Neumann, in the above quotation, speaks of the anima as that which lures the male. And yet anima is part of the Archetypal Feminine. What relation does anima have to women? When Jung first brought forth the concepts of animus and anima, he

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[37]Hillman, Spring 1974, p. 139.

[38]Jung, Aion, trans. R.F.C. Hull, Collected Works, Vol. 9, ii (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 21.

described them only as contrasexual elements. Anima is found only in the male psyche and animus in the female. "The anima is presumably a psychic representation of the minority of female genes in a man's body."[39] "The anima can be defined as the image or archetype or deposit of all the experiences of man with woman."[40] Anima images, then, emerge from this biological base, from the inherited collective image, and from a man's experience with women in his life, particularly his mother. The anima is always a subordinate function, the inferior side of a man, and vice versa for the animus. But anima and animus are also what Jung calls "border phenomena," that is, they function on the border between the personal and the collective unconscious. Anima and animus mediate the contents of the collective unconscious to consciousness. As the objective psyche is experienced as "other" than the ego, so it presents itself to consciousness in images of the opposite sex, as familiar and as foreign to the ego as one sex is to another.

> . . . Sexual polarity introduces us to the mystery of otherness. The ego's meeting with the objective psyche is symbolized by one sex meeting the other; this is the spiritual function of sexual polarity.[41]

Since anima and animus reach into, or emerge out of the collective unconscious, they must be considered archetypes. They are, then, too far-reaching to be limited by

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[39]Jung, Psychology and Religion, Collected Works, Vol. 11 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 48.

[40]Jung, Alchemical Studies, Collected Works Vol. 13 Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 39.

[41]Ulanov, p. 37.

contrasexuality. The anima archetype, i.e., the transformative character, affects women as well as men. Anima phenomena are not limited to men alone, but her moods, her striving for relationship, her association with reverie, imagination, and fantasy, and her preoccupation with fate and death affect women as deeply as men. It is the anima as an archetypal structure of consciousness that will be emphasized here. As complexes in the personal unconscious, anima and animus are subordinate and inferior. As archetypal symbols they lead the ego to the Self, to wholeness.

Both the words "anima" and "psyche" linguistically have to do with air, "the living air of the head as a holy seat of generative power."[42] This living, generative air, like the psyche, is an invisible element. It is the heavy, cool vapour which hovers around the earth and death. Anima is the soul, the vaporous soul-substance. The airy imagination of the soul, the ability to imagine events outside of the physical body in the subtle body of fantasy, is an anima quality, the secret key to psychological work.

> . . . The German word Seele is closely related, via the Gothic form saiwalô, to the Greek word . . . which means 'quick-moving,' 'changeful of hue,' 'twinkling,' something like a butterfly . . . which reels drunkenly from flower to flower and lives on honey and love. . . . Among primitives the soul is the magic breath of life (hence the term 'anima'), or a flame.[43]

It is important, then, to recognize the full range of psychic

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[42]Hillman, Spring 1973, p. 102.

[43]Jung, Archetypes, p. 26.

significance of the air element, as Hillman poetically de- scribes it:

> Anima air pertains: to the tempests . . . named after her ('Anna,' 'Betty,' 'Carol' . . .) by the weather bureau; to the entire realm of internal weather, its pressure, its moisture, its mists; to enthusiasm and inspirations, explosions and collapses; to the creatures of the air like butterflies and spiders, angels and witches, little red balloons and gas-bags, every kind of bird and stinging winged thing; to distancing, depth of perspective and horizon, to invisibilities, and hunches that fall from the sky, auguries too; to the evocative power of scents, and to sound and song and speech, mind and intellect. The psychological intellect is itself an aspect of soul, one of its airy phenomena.[44]

The function of anima, then, is to animate, to bring life and energy to an otherwise dull, lifeless, unreflective ego. The anima is the archetype of life, as the animus is the archetype of meaning. The anima communicates through images, mediating unconscious contents to consciousness. The animus gives words to these feelings and images. Both are necessary for consciousness.

Jung describes the anima's function as relationship, as eros. But Hillman delineates more clearly the distinction between anima and eros, soul and love desire:

> . . . The first [anima] is moist, vegetative, receptive, indirect, ambiguous; its consciousness is reflective and in flux. The second [eros] is fiery, phallic, spirited, directed, sporadic and unattached, vertical as an arrow, torch or ladder. Anima refers to the archaic, historical, and traditional past. Eros is forever young, has no history and even wipes out history, or creates its own,

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[44] Hillman, Spring 1974, p. 131.

> its 'love-story.' And where anima withdraws towards meditative isolation--the retreat of the soul--eros seeks unions.[45]

Anima images are reflections of eros, the containers of eros. They are the objects of desire, not the desire itself. For anima is an internally located function, while eros is externally oriented.

> . . . We fall in and out of love or are carried and redeemed, or cursed, through its working, but that which love works upon is not love but soul. Soul is the arrow's target, the fire's combustible material, the labyrinth through which it dances. It is especially this structural notion that I would emphasize: anima as an archetypal structure of consciousness. As such it provides a specifically structured mode of being in the world, a way of behaving, perceiving, feeling, that give events the significance--not of love--but of soul.[46]

Anima consciousness is mood determined, involving attachment to someone or something; but to subsume her under the image of Aphrodite, Eros' mother, is to distort both love and soul. It is to cover the totally sexual, lusting, erotic Aphrodite with a virginal soul image which is what Western Christianity has done. As Hillman puts it:

> . . . Modern man has an accumulated debt to Aphrodite on which she is today exacting payments at a furious rate. It is as if she were actually demanding our souls for all the centuries that they were denied to her by Judeo-Christian repression.[47]

Anima is not eros, but her first inclination is toward love. Love is essential to the soul; and the soul is that through

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[45]Hillman, Spring 1973, p. 102.

[46]Hillman, Spring 1973, p. 103.

[47]Hillman, Spring 1973, p. 106.

which we receive love; but love and soul are not identical. However, lest too sweet a picture is painted and anima is sacrificed on an altar of love, it must be pointed out that:

> . . . Hatred, spite, suspicion, jealousy, rejection, enmity, deception, betrayal, cruelty, misanthropy, ridicule play their part in anima experiences.[48]

As anima cannot be identified with eros, it can also not be identified with the feeling function. They are often connected, since feeling is frequently an inferior function for men and it merges with the inferior anima. Actually, anima leads away from feeling, i.e., the specific evaluative relatedness that arises between two people or the ego and an event. Anima casts a relationship or event into a wider, fateful archetypal drama or melodrama by evoking images and moods.

> . . . the anima whose mythologizing fantasy and reflective function remind of life, fate, and death. She does not lead into human feeling, but out of it. As the function that relates conscious and unconscious, she occludes conscious feeling, making it unconscious and making the human, inhuman.[49]

She is the projection-making factor. When she stands between the ego and the world she makes everything "bigger than life," fascinating and luring the ego into adventures through which it is transformed.

> . . . Interposed between the ego and the world, she acts like an ever-changing Shakti, who weaves the veil of Maya and dances the illusion of existence. But, functioning between the ego and the

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[48]Hillman, Spring 1973, p. 110.

[49]Hillman, Spring 1973, p. 112.

> unconscious, the anima becomes the matrix of all the divine and semi-divine figures, from the pagan goddess to the Virgin, from the messenger of the Holy Grail to the saint.[50]

As she is the archetype of psychic consciousness and the archetype mediating unconsciousness, personifying the collective unconscious, and mediating the unknown, even appearing herself as unknown, so anima consciousness gives awareness of one's unconsciousness. She is the craziness of life, "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." The ego sees this as elusive, capricious, and vacillating, but this is only the ego's perspective. Actually, it is a consciousness conscious of its unconsciousness. Anima images expressing this appear as innocent, empty, vague, white, or dark, as smoke, mist, or opacity. She behaves in an elusive, enigmatic, obscurantist manner, has dubious or shady origins, and often is seen veiled or hidden with her face turned away.

> . . . She mystifies, produces sphinx-like riddles, prefers the cryptic and occult where she can remain hidden: she insists upon uncertainty.[51]

But it is this awareness of one's unconsciousness, or the recognizing of the anima among her endless guises and guiles which is soul-making. And soul-making precedes self-individuating. She gives that discriminating knowledge which Śakti evokes in Śiva by dancing before him. Her dance creates the universe of manifest forms, and he watches. He does not cut her with the sword of discrimination (the heroic ego's rash inclination)

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[50]Carl Jung, The Practice of Psychotherapy, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series XVI (New York: Pantheon Books, 1966), p. 295.

[51]Hillman, Spring 1974, p. 126.

but quietly watches (as the Self). It is through this mode of consciousness that spiritual transformation occurs. The Indian symbolism will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6, following analysis of the concept of the feminine in the Paleolithic and Neolithic eras in chapter 4.

Chapter 4

THE PRIMITIVE CONCEPT OF THE GODDESS

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss the origin and development of human culture from its earliest beginnings. However, an attempt to trace the development of worship of the feminine which became symbolized in the image of the Great Goddess must begin 40,000-30,000 years ago with the female figurines of the Aurignacian period of the Paleolithic era found by the archeologists. This chapter will focus on a selective analysis of our earliest beginnings in order to enlarge the vision of the historical eye, which equates the beginning of value in human life with the patriarchal takeover of the third millenium B. C. The question arises for a few as to what was taken over, that is, what were the myths and cultic images of people during the many years between the time of Pithecanthropus erectus, who used tools and fire, and the development of the patriarchal hieratic city state in Mesopotamia about 3500 B. C., which marks the beginning of writing and "civilization." Or, a more conservative phrasing of the question would look only as far back as Neanderthal man, of the Middle Paleolithic era, about 100,000-75,000 years ago, since it is with these people that the first evidence of ritual is documented.

These people buried their dead in graves, indicating some kind of belief system concerning the meaning of death. In either case, there is an enormous block of time in which it is clear that people had some religious conceptions and practices, before the patriarchal hordes streamed forth from the Ancient Near East to spread the power of their male deities. It seems that during this time of prehistory there was another social order, which is in certain forms called matriarchal; and there was another spiritual order which recognized and worshipped the Divine as the Great Goddess. Obviously this is a vast subject, a vast expanse of time, twenty-five times the length of human history, and covering a vast space, since worship of the Great Goddess is found in some form among almost all early people. This will be only a brief, selective survey, which will, hopefully, suggest the wealth of material there is yet to be explored. The purpose here is to look at the archetypal nature of this early worship through an analysis of the symbolic images.

Paleolithic Concept of the Goddess

Among the Neanderthal people of the Middle Paleolithic (or Mousterian) period, approximately 100,000/75,000-30,000/25,000 years ago, is the first evidence of grave burials, particularly a very careful (ceremonial?) burial of skulls, which implies some idea of a life after death, and some sort of ritual. The particular way in which the skull is severed from the neck and the incision made at the base of the skull is exactly the same as that which Australian

head hunters do today, suggesting some sort of ritual cannibalism from this age, and perhaps reaching as far back as Pithecanthropian man.

> . . . The conclusion is that the mutilation of the base of the skull has been performed by 'early' and 'late' Neanderthals for a very long time, estimated to be about 250,000 years.[1]

These were sturdy people who traveled north of the Himalayas with fire and animal skin clothing to keep them warm. They were a hunting and gathering society, with the corresponding development of hunting magic and cave paintings. There also seems to be a beginning of woman's magic here. As the men dealt with the animals and had their rituals and shamans, so women have always been involved in the natural life-giving mysteries of menstruation, childbirth, and lactation, and were shamanesses. These natural phenomena which are necessary for life itself must have deeply affected all peoples and constituted a primary imprinting pattern in the unconscious psyche concerning the fearsome and mysterious powers of women.

> . . . the mysteries of childbirth and menstruation are natural manifestations of power. The rites of protective isolation, defending both the woman herself and the group to which she belongs, are rooted in a sense and idea of mysterious danger, whereas the boys' and men's rites are, rather, a social affair. The latter become rationalized in systems of theology. But the natural mysteries of birth and menstruation are as directly convincing as death itself, and remain to this day what they

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[1] Alberto C. Blanc, "Some Evidence for the Ideologies of Early Man," Social Life of Early Man, ed. Sherwood L. Washburn (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1961), p. 131.

must also have been in the beginning, primary sources of religious awe.[2]

It is with the artifacts left by Cro-Magnon people, about 30,000-10,000 B. C., in the Upper Paleolithic period, that elaborate cave paintings and groups of female figurines are discovered which give more specific information as to the nature of these early peoples' ideologies.

> . . . The evidence for a complicated and rich ideological world in the so-called <u>Homo sapiens</u> of the Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic is abundant. The cave engravings and paintings, the burials with their widely varying peculiarities, the evidence for sacrifices, . . . and the burials of skulls or the evidence of the use of parts of the skull furnish valuable material for comparison with similar habits (or behavior) not only among the living so-called 'primitives' but also in the folklore of the populations that have so-called 'higher civilizations.'[3]

There seems to be little doubt that the beginnings of art stem from these cave paintings which appear to be the work of the shamans of the Great Hunt and which, therefore, have ritual and magical value.

> . . . Magic beliefs, including black magic, are widely evidenced in the Upper Paleolithic. The topographic locations of engravings, paintings, and sculptures, often in the deepest and least accessible parts of the caves; the subjects treated; the almost constant alteration of the natural proportions of the human body; the fact that the same rock wall was repeatedly used and covered with successive artistic productions, covering one another and forming a sort of palimpsest, leave little doubt of the magic purpose of most of the Upper Paleolithic art.[4]

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[2]Joseph Campbell, <u>The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology</u>, (New York: Viking Press, 1959), p. 372.

[3]Blanc, p. 119. [4]Blanc, p. 120.

The Upper Paleolithic, or Stone Age, which is the culminating age of the Great Hunt, has four major divisions: Aurignacian, Solutrean, Magdalenian, and Capsian-Microlithic, which is also called the Proto-neolithic and which ushers in the Neolithic period. The Aurignacian period was established throughout western Asia and into Afghanistan by about 35,000 B.C.[5] However, radio-carbon dating in southwestern France places it about 28,500-22,000 B. C. It covered quite a large area.[6] It is both Erich Neumann's and Joseph Campbell's opinion that a mythology of the goddess existed from this period, attested to by the numbers of female figurines discovered. Campbell calls this the "High period of the Paleolithic female figurine."[7]

The female figurines are simply and boldly styled, while the cave paintings of the same period are linear and somewhat stiff stylistically. Of the figures known, there are many more female than male figures. These male figures are poorly made, unlike the female figurines, which suggests that they did not have as much cult significance.[8] The female figurines were connected with the male hunting ritual, however, for they are often found in the entrances of caves

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[5]Graham Clark, World Prehistory, An Outline (Cambridge: University Press, 1961), p. 52.

[6]Clark, p. 52. [7]Campbell, p. 374.

[8]Erich Neumann, The Great Mother, trans. Ralph Manheim, Bollingen Series XLVII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 95.

which were filled with remnants of the hunting cult. There seems to be, though, a distinction between the shamanistic hunting cult of the men and the Goddess fertility cult of the women. The women were involved in the male cult through the use of their magic to protect and ensure the success of the hunting rites. However, among themselves, there was a highly developed cult with its own values and excluding the men.

The female figurines reveal something of the nature of the women's cult:

> With their emphasis on the impersonal and transpersonal, these figures of the Great Mother Goddess are primordial types of the feminine elementary character. In all of them the sym- bolism of the rounded vessel predominates. The belly and breasts, the latter often gigantic, are like the central regions of this feminine vessel, the 'sole reality.' In these figures the fertility of the Feminine has found an ex- pression both prehuman and superhuman. The head is sightless, inclined toward the middle of the body; the arms are only suggested, and they too stress the middle of the body. The gigantic thighs and loins taper off into thin legs; the feet have broken off, but there is no doubt that they were frail and by no means conceived as supports of the giant body-vessel.[9]

The theme of the vessel or womb which is shown here in the body of the Goddess herself, does not only refer to the womb of a particular human female and its miraculous power to produce life, but is abstracted in later times to symbolize the womb of the Great Mother in which all this universe is contained:

> The unshapely figures of the Great Mother are representations of the pregnant goddess of fertility,

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[9]Neumann, pp. 95-6.

> who was looked upon throughout the world as the goddess of pregnancy and childbearing, and who, as a cult object not only of women but also of men, represents the archetypal symbol of fertility and of the sheltering, protecting, and nourishing elementary character.[10]

One example of such a figurine is the so-called Venus of Laussel, who is the central figure of a hunting shrine, found in bas-relief on the wall of a rock shelter in southern France, from a very early Aurignacian period, about 30,000 B. C.[11] She has the big breasts and hips typical of these Stone Age figurines, holds a bison's horn in her right hand and is painted red. With her are two other female figures holding unknown objects in their right hands. One female has the head and shoulders of another figure underneath her, possibly suggesting a birth; and there are various slabs and blocks which are incised with female genital symbols. While these figurines basically symbolize the containing elementary character, the horn held in the Venus figurine's hand and the figurine giving birth suggest the archetypal transformative character of growth and change which becomes predominant in the Neolithic period. About one hundred thirty other female figurines of these mammoth hunting cultures have been found, with no feet. Obviously they were intended to be set up in shrines as objects of cult worship.

> . . .the female figurines, carved in bond, stone, or mammoth ivory, are nude, and simply standing. Many are extremely obese, and of these some are radically stylized in a remarkably 'modern' manner to give dramatic--and, no doubt, symbolically intended--

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[10]Neumann, p. 96. [11]Campbell, pp. 287-88.

emphasis to the great loins, the pubic triangle, and the nourishing breasts.[12]

Another early example is the Venus of Willendorf, in lower Austria, who is about four and three-eighths inches tall, very corpulent, with thin legs and arms and huge breasts. There is also the so-called Venus of Lespugne, about five and three-fourths inches tall, carved of ivory, with thin shoulders and huge breasts. There are slight differences between these two images, as pointed out by Neumann:

> . . . In the magnificent Lespugne figure, whose breasts, belly, thighs, and triangular genital zone form a single cluster, this symbolic fullness of the elementary character is still more evident than in the naturalistic and therefore less symbolic Venus of Willendorf.[13]

Another image from Grimaldi is steatopygous and pregnant. Steatopygia, i.e., emphasis on the posterior, may refer to early fertility rituals in which the act of copulation is performed from the rear, as with animals; and/or it may refer symbolically to the sedentary nature of the Great Mother who is represented as sitting on, possessing, the earth, like a huge stone or a mountain. Marija Gimbutas argues that those Neolithic figurines labeled steatopygous are not so, but represent a form of the Bird Goddess. The exaggerated buttocks represent a hybrid bird-woman figure who carries an egg within her body, revealing her role in the Neolithic myth of the genesis of the world from a cosmic egg.[14] Either interpretation

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[12]Campbell, p. 313. [13]Neumann, p. 96.

[14]Marija Gimbutas, The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1974), p. 17.

reflects the figurines' elementary character.

The second theme is suggested by the fact that almost all of these paleolithic figurines are nude, while corresponding drawings of male figures, i.e., in the cave paintings, are clothed. This suggests that there is an importance in the image of the naked female form in itself; that is, the feminine was worshipped in her very being, clearly revealed in her physical form, rather than worshipped as the agent of some magical act.

> . . . And so it is that, whereas the men in their rites (as initiates, tribal dignitaries, shamans, or what not) are invariably invested with magical costumes, the most potent magic of the womanly body inheres in itself. In all her primary epiphanies, therefore, whether in the paleolithic figurines or in the neolithic, she is typically the naked goddess, with an iconographic accent on the symbolism of her own magical form.[15]

It is not that the creative and protective function of the Great Mother is not worshipped; it seems to be rather that these functions are of a different character than male functions. They are unconscious, that is, they occur of themselves without a female's conscious interference or manipulation; while male functions seem to be more controlled and conscious, demanding the development of certain skills and the achievement of a goal, e.g., in the hunt. This unconsciousness has had both positive and negative effects. For females were able to create the first bonding relationship between creatures, either animal or human, the maternal bonding.

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[15] Campbell, pp. 388-9.

. . . The origin of all social bonds, the only one which exists among the higher animals and in the most primitive human groups, is that created by mother-love.[16]

From the maternal bonding all other forms of emotion and social relationship grow. But the strength of this unconscious, instinctual role has trapped women also, so that women have acted these archetypal roles unconsciously, rather than always facing and integrating them consciously.

But to males, the inherent powers of women must have seemed alien and perhaps frightening.

. . . Furthermore, the mysterious (one might even say, magical) functioning of the female body in its menstrual cycle, in the ceasing of the cycle during the period of gestation, and in the agony of birth--and the appearance, then, of the new being; these, certainly, have made profound imprints on the mind. The fear of menstrual blood and isolation of women during their periods, the rites of birth, and all the lore of magic associated with human fecundity make it evident that we are here in the field of one of the major centers of interest of the human imagination.[17]

At Mal'ta in the Lake Baikal region, one of the chief centers of shamanism today, about twenty female statuettes of mammoth ivory were found, ranging from one and one-half to five and one-half inches tall; and all were nude except for one clothed in a cave-lion's skin. Also, the skeleton of a four-year-old child was found, lying in a fetal position, with the head turned toward the left, and the whole body facing the east, where the sun is reborn every day. This suggests the

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16Robert Briffault, The Mothers (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1959), p. 44.

17Campbell, p. 59.

third major theme of the Great Mother figures of paleolithic times. The Mother is not only the womb from which all phenomena are born, but She is also the tomb to which all phenomena return. Death is not seen here as ultimate or final, but it is the way to return to the Mother's womb, i.e., the grave, for rebirth. This child was buried in a fetal position so that it would be ready to be born again, and it was placed facing the east, the direction of rebirth. This view of the interconnected cycle of death and rebirth is not peculiar to the Goddess cult but is also seen in the shaman's vision of the archetypal animal, painted on the cave walls, who produces the flesh and blood animals which are killed by the hunters. This death of the animals is not ultimate either, for they, too, return to the earth womb and are born again, for all are manifestations of the archetypal Great Animal.

> . . . the idea of the earth as mother and of burial as a re-entry into the womb for rebirth appears to have recommended itself to at least some of the communities of mankind at an extremely early date.[18]

This idea is often symbolized by a spiral, a circle, a wave, or a meander.

> . . . A goddess represented in this way is never a goddess only of fertility but is always at the same time a goddess of death and the dead. She is the Earth Mother, the Mother of Life, ruling over everything that rises up and is born from her and over everything that sinks back into her.[19]

Perhaps it is in Her function as Mother of Life and

[18]Campbell, pp. 66-7. [19]Neumann, p. 106.

and Death that She unites the two cults of the Paleolithic period. For She is imaged here surrounded by animals, e.g., at Mal'ta the fox, deer, bird, and mammoth, as well as with a human skeleton, suggesting the unitary nature of all life as seen by these early Mother-worshippers.

> This symbolism of the serpent of eternal life appearing in the paleolithic period on the reverse of a plaque bearing on its obverse the labyrinth of death; a fish in the same assemblage bearing the labyrinth on its side; the birds, suggesting a flight of the soul in death, as in shamanistic trance; the orientation to the rising sun; and the fetal posture of the little skeleton--these, in a single grave in a site where twenty statuettes of the goddess were discovered as well as a number of ceremonially buried beasts, speak for the presence of a developed mythology in the late paleolithic, in which the goddess of spiritual rebirth was already associated with the symbols of the very much later neolithic cult of Ishtar-Aphrodite: the bird, the fish, the serpent, and the labyrinth.[20]

She may also be related, as the Lady of Animals, i.e., the bird, fish, and serpent, with the Neolithic Bird and Serpent Goddess, the Minoan Goddess of Doves and Serpents, Artemis the Huntress, and Lakshmi of the Elephants. This theme is not developed in the Paleolithic period, but it is clearly suggested. And it shows another link to the shamanistic cults. As Franz Hancar has pointed out, Siberian reindeer hunters today still carve human figures of aspen and larch wood to represent the ancestral point of origin of all people, and they are always female. When they leave for the hunt they entrust their dwelling to this female figure, and when they return they feed and pray to her.[21] This suggests

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[20]Campbell, p. 388. [21]Campbell, p. 314.

that the efforts of male and female magic or ritual are combined in the struggle for survival. It is not until a later date that antagonism arises.

A final theme which is suggested in this period and which will be seen to occur again and again arises from the perennial human problem of the experience of permanence and change. There appears early in human life an intuition of the changing nature of all phenomena and yet of something behind all this change which seems to be unchanging. It is the agony and mystery of death, the problem that death, of animal or plant, is necessary for the maintenance of life. From the plant world comes the intuition that death and rebirth are opposite sides of one reality, as new plants are seen to grow from the decayed remains of previous plants, as a seed dies when put in the ground and emerges again as a new plant form. Vegetation mysteries symbolize the growth process of the elementary feminine. From these early times, the female seems to represent the permanent element which is continuously giving birth to form.

> . . . And from the point of view of the history of thought . . . these Late Paleolithic Venus figurines come to us as the earliest detectable expression of that undying ritual idea which sees in Woman the embodiment of the beginning and continuance of life, as well as the symbol of the immortality of that earthly matter which is in itself without form, yet clothes all forms.[22]

22Franz Hancar, "On the Problem of the Venus Statuettes in the Eurasian Upper Paleolithic," Praehistorische Zeitschrift, XXX-XXXI Band (1939-40), 1/2 Heft, pp. 85-156, cited by Campbell, pp. 314-5.

The identification of woman, the Goddess, and the earth suggests that all three are themselves symbols of the elemental maternal substance from which all life comes. Woman, Goddess, and earth are each the womb which contains within it all potentiality of form, and receives back into itself all exhausted form so that it can be transformed and emerge again. This concept is startlingly similar to the modern scientific theory of the conservation of energy. It is theorized that energy is not born and does not die, except in relation to a particular form. The amount of energy in the universe is constant, but it is constantly changing form. This concept also previews the Tantric conception of the Goddess as Śakti, primal energy, and of Prakṛti, primordial matter which constantly takes on form, emerging into manifestation, and withdraws that form back into itself, i.e., death of a particular form.

This concept of the Goddess as the origin and matrix of all life, even though symbolized as a nude female form, is always and eternally mysterious. In early Neolithic figures this is seen in the fact that she is almost always nude and masked. She can be honored and worshipped, but no one can probe further into her nature and explain or analyze her origin. Heinrich Zimmer states this quite beautifully:

> . . . if one inquires to know her ultimate origin, the oldest textual remains and images can carry us back only so far, and permit us to say: 'Thus she appeared in those early times; so-and-so she may have been named; and in such-and-such manner she seems to have been revered.' But with that we have come to the primitive problem of her comprehension and being. She is the primum mobile, the first beginning, the material matrix out of which all comes forth. To question beyond her into

> antecedents and origin, is not to understand her, is indeed to misunderstand and underestimate, in fact to insult her. And anyone attempting such a thing well might suffer the calamity that befell that smart young adept who undertook to unveil the veiled image of the Goddess in the ancient Egyptian temple of Sais, and whose tongue was paralyzed forever by the shock of what he saw. According to the Greek tradition the Goddess has declared of herself . . . 'no one has lifted my veil.' It is a question not exactly of the veil, but of the garment that covers her female nakedness--the veil is a later misinterpretation for the sake of decency. The Mother without a spouse, the Original Mother; all are my children, and therefore none has ever dared to approach me; the impudent one who should attempt it shames the Mother--and that is the reason for the curse.[23]

It has been shown that during the Paleolithic Age, particularly the Aurignacian period, there were many female figurines that seem to be part of a cult devoted to the Great Goddess. Five characteristics of the Goddess have been discussed here. First, She is a fertility goddess who shelters, nourishes, and protects living beings. Second, She is generally represented as nude, implying that her very form is seen as a divine center of energy. Third, She is the Goddess of death as well as of birth, tomb and womb. Fourth, She is the embodiment of the continuity, the unchanging process which endlessly gives rise to birth and death. But, finally, anything that can be said about Her cannot dispel Her mystery, or lift Her veil. For She is an embodiment of the impenetrable ultimate mystery from which all life issues, and in the face of which all beings are Her children.

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[23]Heinrich Zimmer, The King and the Corpse, ed. Joseph Campbell, Bollingen Series XI (New York: Pantheon Books, 1948), pp. 311-12.

In western Europe, by the second epoch of the Upper Paleolithic, the Solutrean, about 18,000-15,000 B. C. in Southern France, images of the Goddess no longer appear. They are still found in eastern Europe, Moravia, the Ukraine, and Siberia. Eastern Europe maintains worship of the Goddess while it is lost in the West, marking the beginnings of differences between the East and West. It seems that as the climate changed in Europe with the retreat of the ice, hunting patterns changed also. During the period of the mammoth, hunting stations were relatively stationary, which allowed for the protection of dwellings within which women could make their feminine values felt. As this changed the hunters sought the great roaming herds on the steppes, which necessitated a continuously nomadic life. Woman's job was to pack, bear, and unpack all the belongings, thus maintaining what little home there was; while men became obsessed with the idea of the hunt, their achievements, and therefore their superiority. The naked female goddess was replaced by the costumed shaman.

The weather alone, though, cannot account for this change. Many mythologies all over the world refer to an earlier age, during which women held the social power, which was later taken from them by force or by trickery. Some such battle must underlie the complete disappearance of female figurines from Western Europe at the close of the Aurignacian period.

> There can be no doubt that in the very earliest ages of human history the magical force and wonder

> of the female was no less a marvel than the universe itself; and this gave to woman a prodigious power, which it has been one of the chief concerns of the masculine part of the population to break, control, and employ to its own ends.[24]

But why would the men feel it so important to break women's power? What were their own ends? Campbell suggests that the men's motive was their fear of women's prodigious power as creators and destroyers of life. It must be remembered that people at this time did not know of the male's role in procreation, therefore women's pregnancies must have been even more awesome, and left men feeling somewhat alienated. And the symbol of the Mother as tomb, of the negative or devouring aspect of the feminine, must have been, as it still is, a terrifying one. Men were forced to relate to that which was alien and other to themselves, and seem to have done so in a negative way.

> . . . The fear of woman and the mystery of her motherhood have been for the male no less impressive imprinting forces than the fears and mysteries of the world of nature itself. And there may be found in the mythologies and ritual traditions of our entire species innumerable instances of the unrelenting efforts of the male to relate himself effectively--in the way, so to say, of antagonistic cooperation--to these two alien yet intimately constraining forces: woman and the world.[25]

Perhaps what was needed was something like the voice of the soul of the universe which the Eskimo shaman Najagneq heard:

> . . . All we know is that it has a gentle voice like a woman, a voice 'so fine and gentle that even children cannot become afraid.' What it says is . . . 'be not afraid of the universe.'[26]

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[24]Campbell, p. 315. [25]Campbell, pp. 59-60.

[26]Campbell, p. 350.

But the men must not have heard this voice. They feared women and the world, and even in the present so-called "modern," "civilized" world, this fear remains.

> . . . the fact remains that at the western pole of the broad paleolithic domain of the Great Hunt, which stretched from the Cantabrian hills of northern Spain to Lake Baikal in southeast Siberia, the earliest races of the species Homo sapiens of which we have any record made a shift from the vagina to the phallus in their magic, and therewith, perhaps too, from an essentially plant-oriented to a purely animal-oriented mythology.[27]

Neolithic Concept of the Goddess

While worship of the Goddess appears to have ceased in Western Europe, it continues through the Neolithic era in that area designated as "Old Europe" by archaeologist Marija Gimbutas, i.e., the Aegean and Adriatic, including the islands north to Czechoslovakia, southern Poland, and the western Ukraine.[28] Between 7000-3500 B. C. there is evidence of a highly developed culture here involving cultivation of grains, domesticated animals, pottery, bone and stone work, copper metallurgy, and trade and communication with other areas. This flourishing area would probably have developed into an urban center, as did its offshoots, the early Helladic culture of Greece and the Cyclades and the Minoan civilization on Crete, but it was destroyed by the aggressive infiltration of semi-nomadic Indo European patriarchal pastoralists in the fourth millennium B. C. The Aegean Helladic culture survived

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[27]Campbell, p. 325. [28]Gimbutas, p. 17.

until the end of the third millennium, and the Cretan culture until mid-second millennium B. C. The masculine symbols of the Indo-European invaders were imposed upon the feminine symbols of the Old European culture and either replaced them, fused together with them, or coexisted, creating chaos in a previously harmonious mythic view.

> . . . The earliest European civilization was savagely destroyed by the patriarchal element and it never recovered, but its legacy lingered in the substratum which nourished further European cultural developments. The Old European creations were not lost; transformed, they enormously enriched the European psyche.[29]

The purpose here is to examine these feminine symbols of Old Europe in order to perceive more clearly this "substratum" of European culture. Then attention must be turned to another Neolithic mythogenetic zone pointed out by Joseph Campbell in Primitive Mythology, that of the tropical planting culture. During the Paleolithic era worship of the Goddess is associated with the shaman cults and is supportive of the magic of the Great Hunt. As the Neolithic era emerges, and this is dated from c. 10,000 B. C. in Spain and western Europe to c. 7500 B. C. with the Natufian culture near Jerico[30] to c. 7000-6500 B. C. in the Aegean and central Baltic area,[31] worship of the Goddess alone or with her animal companions becomes predominant. Neolithic cultures were characterized by an increase in sedentary habits and reliance on domesticated plants and

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[29]Gimbutas, p. 238. [30]Campbell, p. 136.

[31]Gimbutas, p. 19.

animals, developing into tropical horticultural planting cultures and Old European agricultural and stock-raising societies. As people settled down into larger demographic units, feminine values had an opportunity to develop and become more differentiated. The elementary feminine character continues to be expressed from the Paleolithic to present times. But the hunting, fishing, and agricultural societies of Old Europe began to create new images, e.g., the Bird Goddess, the Snake Goddess, and the Pregnant Vegetation Goddess with her sacrificial pigs; and the tropical planting societies tell the myth of the sacrifice of the maiden. The transformative character of the feminine emerges, and the Goddess is seen, not only as the Great Womb from which life emerges and to which it returns, but also as the one who transforms and regenerates all living things in an endless cycle of death and rebirth.

The image of the Great Mother or Fertility Goddess, who is also the Lady of Beasts and the Terrible Mother, remains stable for the four millennia of the entire Neolithic era in Old Europe. In the Upper Paleolithic She is corpulent and associated with wild animals. Typical Neolithic sculptures of the seventh millennium from Catal Huyuk in central Anatolia show her as a very fat woman, standing or seated, supported by leopards. A bit further west she is seen with domesticated European animals, e.g., dog, bull, he-goat, etc. During the sixth millennium she is less obese, figured with forearms folded and hands on or below her breasts.

> . . . Horizontal forearms, massive arms and shoulders, and the huge abdomen of the marble figurines are typical of the Great Goddess. The physical strength of the female body was an ideal.[32]

During the fifth and fourth millennia her stereotype becomes more clear, a lifeless, almost rigid, chrysalis pose with folded arms, small breasts, tapering legs and a supernatural head in either an oval or triangular shape, sometimes painted red, and with a triangularly marked pubic area. Images were found predominantly in graves, making clear her association with death. Folded arms suggest the foetal position. When a body was buried the arms were folded into a foetal position; and often the bodies were covered with red ochre, suggesting the blood with which a newborn infant is covered. Clearly the grave was seen as the Great Mother's womb which was reentered in preparation for rebirth.

The Great Round of the elementary feminine archetype is seen here as the dead are included within the great life process which encompasses all phenomena and constantly brings them to birth again. There are also sculptures with double figures, i.e., a goddess with a baby on top of her head, two-headed figurines, or mother-daughter figurines which exemplify the rebirth theme. These images are Neolithic precursors of the Hekate-Artemis and Demeter-Kore images of Greek mythology.[33] There is no isolated Death Goddess in the Old European images. Rather, the concept of a continuous life-death duality is expressed, and her role was to stimulate the procreative

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[32]Gimbutas, pp. 153 and 157. [33]Gimbutas, p. 163.

powers of the dead. The Goddess is like the later Sumerian underworld goddess Ninkhursag's title Ninti--nugga, meaning "She who gives life to the dead."[34] Life and death are intertwined and one Goddess rules them both. This "divine ambivalence" is seen by Neumann as a primitive lack of differentiation, a uroboric coincidence of opposites expressed in the juxtaposition of positive and negative features, which will be separated by greater ego consciousness.[35] However, this ambivalent intertwining of opposites may express a profound insight into the continuous life/death process which civilized minds have lost with too much ego consciousness.

Marija Gimbutas, in her excellent book The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe, distinguishes two types of symbols of the goddess: those related to water or rain and those related to the moon or the vegetal life-cycle. Related to water are the snake, bird, phallus, parallel lines, V's, zigzags, chevrons, meanders, and spirals. Related to the moon are the cross, the encircled cross, the crescent, horn, caterpillar, doe, bee, and butterfly. Underlying both sets of symbols is the idea that life is a continual process of birth and growth. The regularity of nature must not be stagnant or obstructed. Creation is seen to have a sacrificial aspect, and both human and animal sacrifices were performed in open air sanctuaries.[36]

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[34]Gimbutas, p. 196.

[35]Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consiousness, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1962), pp. 74-5.

[36]Gimbutas, p. 74.

It is this process of creation/destruction which is the basis for immortality.

Particularly among the Old European tribes who hunted water birds, e.g., the crane, heron, wild goose, and wild duck or grebe, as well as bear and elk, was the belief that the mystery of life originates in water. This idea is not strange to the later Greek mind which saw Dionysius, Athena, and Aphrodite emerge from water, as well as the pre-Socratic philosopher Thales who propounded that water was the primal element and source of life. For these hunting tribes the water bird was their major food supply, so the birds' return from the south in the spring was essential to their survival; and they worshipped the water bird goddess as the giver of nourishment. The image of the bird goddess and the image of the water snake are the vehicles of that energy whose source is water. The symbol of the meander is said to represent the cosmic waters and to have originated as two opposing lines, like two snakes, meeting but not touching.[37] The labyrinth, highly developed in Crete and associated with the Goddess there, emerged from the meander design and is related to the intricate movements of an ancient Greek dance called Geranos, "crane,"[38] as well as to Roman and Hellenistic games and dances.

There are stone and bone water birds from Upper Paleolithic sites in Europe and Siberia which blend with

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[37]Gimbutas, p. 124. [38]Gimbutas, p. 125.

female figures to form the Petersfels type of the Magdalenian period, and are naked with the chevron (an avian symbol) and meander incised on them.[39] From the seventh to the fifth millennia, schematized Bird Goddess figurines are found with a slender body and large hollow buttocks shaped as if to contain an egg. These figurines gave rise to the misleading idea that they are steatopygous, but Gimbutas argues that they express the Neolithic myth of the genesis of the world from a cosmic egg laid by a bird goddess. The symbolism of a bird carrying a cosmic egg reoccurs in Cycladic, Minoan, and Helladic art, but is quite ancient.

> . . . The beginning of the myth must lie in the Paleolithic era. Engraved and sculpted images with silhouetted egg-shaped buttocks are frequent in western and central Europe from the early Aurignacian and on into the Magdalenian period. The more realistically rendered figures have birds' heads and long breasts.[40]

There are many Neolithic egg-shaped sculptures or paintings, for example, the Lepenski Vir sandstone sculptures, from about 6000 B. C., one of which has a vulva engraved in the center. A painting on a Cucuteni vase from the end of the fifth millennium is interpreted by Gimbutas in this way:

> . . . The egg is enveloped in water, represented by parallel lines. The symbol of life energy--the snake--winds across or around the cosmic egg. The beginning of life within an egg is caused by the orbiting of two snakes or fawns. The animals are always in opposition, which creates a tension. . . . A germ within an egg or a vulva may sprout into a plant with buds or with bean-like projections.[41]

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[39]Gimbutas, p. 134. [40]Gimbutas, p. 102.

[41]Gimbutas, pp. 101-2.

And there are many bird-shaped vases from the Balkan area in the seventh millennium which make the relationship of the goddess, bird, egg, and water explicit:

> . . . the Neolithic artist expressed a female divinity in the form of a bird-shaped water jar containing an egg as a fluid substance.[42]

Almost all hunting and fishing cultures from Africa to the Artic zone have the myth of the cosmic egg laid by a water bird. The Egyptians said that the egg was laid by a Nile goose known as the "great chatterer." The Orphic myth tells of uncreated Nyx (Night) who existed before all things and was a great black-winged bird hovering over vast darkness. Alone she laid an egg from which flew golden-winged Eros. From the two parts of the egg shell Ouranos (Heaven) and Gaia (Earth) emerged. Athenagoras, in the second century A. D., tells a similar myth in which a snake with the head of both a lion and a bull emerges from the waters. The patriarchy is dominant by then, though, so the egg is said to be created by a giant, Herakles or Khronos, who emerges out of the snake, a male creation myth.

At the cultural peak of Old Europe, about 5000 B. C., there is a sophisticated image of the Bird and the Snake Goddess. More than forty percent of all the sculpture of the Early Vinča culture at Anza in Macedonia is orinthomorphic. The snake and spiral are also dominant art motifs. This is in contrast to the Indo-European invaders to whom Earth was the

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[42]Gimbutas, p. 106.

Great Mother, for here the Snake and Bird, water and air divinities, are maternal. Rain is like mother's milk. There are many anthropomorphic snake and bird images holding a baby. Delineation between bird and snake forms is not fixed.

> The Snake Goddess and the Bird Goddess appear as separate figures and as a single divinity. Their functions are so intimately related that their separate treatment is impossible. She is one and She is two, sometimes snake, sometimes bird. She is the goddess of waters and air, assuming the shape of a snake, a crane, a goose, a duck, a diving bird. The combination of a water snake and a water bird is a peculiarity of the Old European symbolism representing divine ambivalence.[43]

With divine ambivalence the long neck of the bird is sometimes linked with a snake or phallus, giving a bisexual or androgynous image.

> . . . The image of a phallic Bird Goddess dominates during the seventh and sixth millenia in the Aegean area and the Balkans. Sometimes she is a life-like erect phallus with small wings and a posterior of a woman, which, if seen in profile, is readily identifiable as a bird's body and tail. Or she may take the form of a nude female figurine with a disproportionately long and massive neck which obviously represents a phallus, as in a marble figurine from Attica.[44]

This bisexuality stresses the absolute power and dominion of the divine image, but it is not the power of feminine over masculine. Rather, the two are incorporated in one image, showing themselves as a divine syzygy, complimentary and thereby increasing the power of each.

The snake image has a long and wide history, appearing throughout the Near East, Far East, and the circum-Pacific

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[43]Gimbutas, p. 112. [44]Gimbutas, p. 135.

cultural zone, i.e., from Melanesia and Polynesia to the Americas, as well as in Old Europe. It signifies immortality, eternal life, and natural energy. From a Jungian perspective the serpent can represent prehuman and undifferentiated libido (energy) or a psychic component, i.e., the feminine archetype, capable of becoming conscious. The snake guarantees that nature's enigmatic cycle will maintain itself and its life-giving powers will not diminish, as the snake sloughs its skin and does not die. It is related to the elementary Goddess of the Great Round as the uroboric great serpent eating its own tail and thereby encompassing the universe.

> . . . Some vases flaunt a gigantic snake winding or stretching over 'the whole universe,' over the sun or moon, stars and rain torrents; elsewhere the snake winds above or below a growing plant or coils above the pregnant mother's belly. Snakes coil in concentric circles covering every protuberance, the buttocks as well as the female abdomen. The sanctity of protuberance is indicated by the special attention given every convex roundness of the female body. . . . The snake was stimulator and guardian of the spontaneous life energy, and this anatomical association, so frequent that its symbolic meaning cannot be doubted, demonstrates the power that was attributed to bodily protuberances as its source.[45]

The snake's relation to the body and to rounded shapes points to its tremendous vitality and mythic function as an energy source, so powerful that it is said to move the entire universe. This is not strange to Eastern minds, who describe the Kuṇḍalinī energy which resides at the base of the spine of the human body as "She who is coiled," the serpent power. Kuṇḍalinī is the individual form of Śakti, the energy of the entire

[45]Gimbutas, p. 95.

universe. And it is not strange to Western minds who remember that the influence of the serpent on Eve was great enough to cause all creation to fall. The snake also appears in a hybrid snake-woman image:

> From the Early Neolithic to ancient Greece the snake appears in an anthropomorphic shape as a Snake Goddess. Her body is usually decorated with stripes or snake spirals, while her arms and legs are portrayed as snakes, or she is entwined by one or more snakes.[46]

The second set of symbols delineated by Gimbutas are symbols of becoming, of Transformation and Regeneration, related to the moon, cross, crescent, horns, doe, caterpillar, bee, and butterfly. These symbols indicate the active process of creation, the continuous striving toward wholeness. They relate to the transformative character of the feminine archetype which is the dynamic aspect urging, luring, and driving toward change. Since the main theme of Old European mythic imagery is the task of sustaining life in a sometimes difficult environment, the energy which gives regeneration is most sacred, and this is symbolized in transformation images.

> . . . She, the Great Goddess, is associated with moon crescents, quadripartite designs and bull's horns, symbols of continuous creation and change. The mysterious transformation is most vividly expressed in her epiphany in the shape of a caterpillar, chrysalis and butterfly.[47]

The cross represents the year which is like a journey embracing all four cardinal directions, thus it is an abstract symbol of the cosmic cycle. The cross is sometimes shown

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[46]Gimbutas, p. 101. [47]Gimbutas, p. 237.

enclosed in a circle, expressing the cycles within the whole. The moon is, of course, cyclic, from new moon waxing to full moon and waning to the dark absence of moon. The crescent is obviously related to the changes of the moon, and horns often represent the crescent shape.

> . . . The worship of the moon and horns is the worship of the creative and fecund powers of nature.[48]

The horns were often bulls' horns which are fast growing like the waxing moon, and the bull was seen as an invigorator of growth. Schematized horned stands were often found in temple areas, some with breasts on the base of the stand. Bull horns were used down into Minoan times as horns of consecration alongside the Goddess either standing or symbolized by the double-axe, a tree, or a pillar. There were quite a lot of pillars in Minoan palaces, some with a place for insertion of a double-axe, and some with a tree growing out of them. The pillar and tree are symbolically interrelated, representing the power of life and the goddess.[49] The tree emerges again in the Biblical Eden myth as a symbol of transformation, giving knowledge of good and evil, or immortality.

Horns also represent the deer sacred to northern hunting peoples, who saw the cycle of regeneration in the growth of its antlers. Myths talk of the mother of the universe as a doe-elk or a wild reindeer-doe, and they tell of pregnant women who rule the world and look like deer, covered with hair

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[48]Gimbutas, p. 91 [49]Gimbutas, p. 174.

and with branching horns on their heads. On the insides of many bowls from the fourth millennium in the Ukraine the schematically portrayed body of a deer is transformed into a whirling crescent shape. One bowl shows spinning deer antlers around a cross, with two pairs of crescents and a dog, another representation of the Goddess, all feminine transformation symbols.[50] In later mythology the doe is sacred to Artemis and Diana, suggesting their primary nature as transformative goddesses.

Another major symbol of transformation of the Goddess is the bee. There is an ancient belief attested to from 250 B. C. on by Ovid, Virgil, and Porphyry, among others, that bees are produced from bulls, particularly from the horns of dead bulls which have been buried with only the horns above ground. Porphyry writes:

> The ancients gave the name of Melissae ('bees') to the priestesses of Demeter who were initiates of the chthonian goddess; the name Melitodés to Kore herself: the moon (Artemis) too, whose province it was to bring to the birth, they called Melissa, because the moon being a bull and its ascension the bull, bees are begotten of bulls.[51]

The theme of regeneration is expressed here in the connection between Artemis, the bull, bees, and the moon. At Ephesus the bee was Artemis' cult animal, her priestesses were also called melissae and her eunuch priests called essenes, drones. The image of the goddess as an insect, especially a bee, has a long history from the Neolithic, and beekeeping was practiced by the Cretans from the beginning of the

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[50]Gimbutas, p. 174. [51]Gimbutas, p. 182.

Neolithic era.[52] There is a Boetian amphora from about 700 B. C., usually called "Lady of the Wild Things," in which the Goddess is shown with insect arms, zigzagging hair and a serrated line around the lower part of the body. She is flanked by two lions, a decapitated bull's head, a bottle-shaped object, birds and swastikas (ancient symbols of eternal life). Gimbutas suggests that she should more aptly be entitled the "Goddess of Periodic Regeneration." She is shown with a fish inside her, a symbol of fecundity related to water. The loose bull's head is that of a sacrificed bull. The bull is dead and the new life begins. The swastikas (wheels, concentric circles, rosettes) turn, the snakes crawl, the beasts howl (by the middle of the third millenium B. C. lions had replaced the more ancient dogs). The epiphany of the goddess is inseparable from the noise of howling and clashing, and the whirling dances.[53] The bee symbolism is also taken up in the <u>Devī-Māhātmyam</u>, to be discussed in chapter 6, when the Great Goddess promises to slay a demon named Aruna by taking a "collective bee-form, consisting of innumerable bees."[54]

The last transformation symbol of Old Europe to be discussed here is the butterfly. Sir Arthur Evans, excavator of the Palace of Minos at Knossos and scholar of Minoan culture, has pointed out the abundance of motifs of chrysalises,

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52 Gimbutas, p. 184. 53 Gimbutas, p. 183.

54 The <u>Devī-Māhātmyam or Śrī Durgā-Saptaśatī</u>, trans. Swami Jagadīśvarānanda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1972), ch. 11, vs. 53.

caterpillars, butterflies, and double-axes in Minoan and Mycenean culture. He interprets the chrysalis as a symbol of new life after death. The chrysalis form is much more ancient, however, being indicated by the shape of the Vinča goddess' skirts, from 4000 B. C.[55] Schematic butterflies are the prototype of the Minoan double-axe, for this symbol of the Goddess occurs several thousand years prior to the production of metal axes. The Minoan double-axe is not warlike but has ritual usage, unlike the axe of the Indo-Europeans which belonged to their thunder god and symbolized his potency. The butterfly double-axe is a much more ancient symbol of transformation.

> An upper torso of a female figurine with schematized butterflies incised beneath the breasts was found at Passo di Corvo, a neolithic settlement of the sixth millenium B. C., north of Foggia, southeast Italy. . . . Another emblem of regeneration or birth-giving resembles the letter M. It was incised randomly on the back and front of the torso. The phallic top of the figurine's head was encircled by a spiral, probably a snake. The uplifted face of the figurine was masked and impressed dots around the neck suggest a bead necklace. The accumulation of symbols allows one to regard this figurine as a Great Goddess in her function as the Goddess of Regeneration.[56]

Other animal epiphanies of the Goddess include the dog as a double of the Moon Goddess, the toad and turtle as a birth-giving goddess imaged with legs spread and arms upraised, the hedgehog and the bear as protectress and nurse.

In her incarnation as a pregnant doe, a chrysalis, caterpillar, butterfly, bee, toad, turtle,

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[55]Gimbutas, pp. 45-50. [56]Gimbutas, p. 186.

> or hedgehog, she was a symbol of embryonic life and regeneration. In this fundamental notion lies her association with the moon and the horns. As a bee or a butterfly she emerges from the body or horns of the bull; as a bear she takes care of all young life.[57]

The image of the Pregnant Vegetation Goddess arises with agriculture in the Neolithic era. Pregnant figurines are not found earlier than the seventh millennium, but those of the seventh and sixth millennia are nude, suggesting a relationship to the Paleolithic naked goddess of fertility cults. Those of the fifth and fourth millennia are clothed except for the abdomenal area which is exposed and incised with a snake image. She is represented either by the ideogram of a dot in a lozenge (a square shape) or a lozenge within a lozenge painted or incised on the belly, or by a naturalistic pregnant female figure with hands above her belly. The dot symbolizes seed, and the lozenge a sown field. She is related to the square lozenge shape, not a circle, representing earthbound matter. Sometimes the figures were impressed with real grain, making the relationship between the fertility of women and the earth obvious. The best examples of this image are the vessel-shaped Lady of Kökénydomb in southeastern Hungary, whose lower body is clothed in a lozenge design, and the Lady of Pazardžik from central Bulgaria, who is incised with flowing lines and lozenges.[58]

The animal double of the Pregnant Vegetation Goddess is the pig. Pig sculptures can be found in all areas and times of

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[57]Gimbutas, p. 196. [58]Gimbutas, p. 208.

Neolithic Old Europe. The relationship between the pig and the goddess is obvious in an early Vinča sixth millennium pregnant vegetation goddess who wears a pig mask. Also, pig sculptures have been found impressed with grain like the goddess' sculptures. The pig image makes a direct connection to the rites of Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis in historic times, giving perhaps an indication of their ancient roots.

The second Neolithic mythogenetic zone to be examined is that of the tropical planting culture of cannibal gardeners, which was found in Africa, India, Indonesia, Oceania, and America. It is quite difficult to date this culture which has left few artifacts, since their building materials were perishable, e.g., bamboo, pandamus leaves, shell, bone, feathers, palm fronds, bark, etc.[59] But this area has been occupied by human beings for at least half a million years, e.g., the bones of Pithecanthropus erectus, about 400,000 B. C. were found in Java.[60] Professor Adolf Jensen of Frankfort, who has studied these cultures, developing the earlier (i.e., 1895-1897) theories of Leo Frobenius, dates them in the early Neolithic or perhaps Mesolithic era.[61]

Jensen describes the mythology of these horticulturist cultures as based on the model of life and death in the plant world. The basic mythic figure is a deity who offers her/himself willingly or unwillingly as a human sacrifice in

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[59]Campbell, p. 172. [60]Campbell, p. 172.

[61]Campbell, p. 173.

order that the group as a whole may survive. Immortality is held by the group, e.g., the tribe, nation, or species, not by the individual. So immortality is gained through identification with the group. In the shamanistic hunting mythology the basic mythic figure is the archetypal Great Animal, who is known directly by the shaman. The Great Animal, like the Vedic Ātman, is never born and never dies. All physical animals are only Platonic shadows on the cave wall; therefore, to the shaman and his hunters the killing of the hunted animal is sacrifice enough, sacrifice of the illusory to the unchanging reality. Immortality is individual, symbolized by a piece of bone representing the unchanging archetypal animal which, with the proper magic, will be brought to life again in another form; where there is magic there is no death.[62] To the planter, however, there is real death, real birth, real pain, and real transformation. The true self is like the seed which must be planted in the ground and die in order to be reborn. The original divine being, who at one time in the past was always present and unchanging, through some specific event which ended the previous mythological age, voluntarily or not, was transformed and now dies and reappears, like the moon, or like Christ. For the Hebrew, Greek, Indian Tantra, and Aztec, as well as the myths of the Dema of New Guinea are, or were, planting mythologies.

In the planting mythologies, the transformative aspect

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[62]Campbell, p. 293.

of the archetypal feminine is dominant. The elementary concept of the Great Round is present, for all matter is identified with the Goddess; it is nothing but the Goddess who is born, dies, is eaten and born again. But the process operates through the transformation mystery of birth in pain and death in pain. This pain of transformation must either be redeemed, as Christ did through a willing sacrifice to appease God's justice as St. Anselm describes it, or it must be identified with and enacted, following the model of the Dema maiden Hainuwele.

The myth of Hainuwele was discovered by Jensen in West Ceram, an island to the west of New Guinea. Briefly, the story is that a man named Ameta (meaning 'Dark,' 'Black,' or 'Night') discovered a magical girl child who was miraculously born and grew to maidenhood in three days. At the great Maro Dance at Nine Dance Grounds, she stood in the center of the dancing, giving presents to all. The people became jealous and killed her during the dance. When her father discovered her body he cut it into pieces and buried it, except for the two arms. Plants, which became the main food of the people, grew from her buried body. He took the arms to Satena, another divine Dema maiden, who was angry because the people had killed; and she judged them, changing some people into animals or spirits. Satena then left them and went to the Underworld and they must undertake a long journey in order to meet her again.[63]

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[63]Campbell, pp. 173-76.

This myth expresses the reciprocities of death and life. It tells of the mythological event through which death came into the world; and it is murder. The world is seen as living on death; it is "Nature red in tooth and claw." This is partially modeled on beasts of prey, who express the primal force of nature, but more clearly on the plant world in which the plant is killed by gathering its fruit but it gives new life.

> The divine being (the Dema) has become flesh in the living food-substance of the world: which is to say, in all of us, since all of us are to become, in the end, food for other beings.[64]

As seen in other myths of these cultures, sexual organs appear at this time of the coming of death. Death and sexuality imply each other, as do killing and eating. Thus death leads to transformation, even as the first death brought about a complete transformation of human life. The presexual and premortal age of innocence described in this myth is reminiscent of Adam and Eve's situation in Eden before the Fall. The Eden story in Genesis, chapter two, also describes a mythological event which in a single unique moment closes the paradisal age and opens the present world of death and sex. There are other significant comparisons but they must be reserved for a fuller treatment of the Eden story and the figure of Eve, who is prefigured here by Hainuwele.

The third Dema virgin told of in these Indonesian myths is Rabia, who is pursued by the sun-man Tuwale who

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[64]Campbell, p. 180.

wants to marry her. Her parents place a dead pig in the bridal bed instead of her, and he then causes Rabia to sink into the earth. She tells her mother to slaughter a pig and hold a death feast for her and in three days she will return as a light in the night, i.e., the moon.[65] A connection between woman, death, sexuality, food, pig, and the moon in this mythology is clear.

These motifs are evident in another mythologem, the story of Demeter and Persephone, ritualized in the Eleusinian Mysteries of ancient Greece. Persephone or Kore, "the maiden," daughter of Demeter, the Grain-Mother, is abducted by Hades, Lord of the Underworld, while she is playing with other maidens, either daughters of Okeanos, the uroboric sea-god, or Artemis and Athena. Demeter and Hekate, goddess of the moon, wander the earth looking for Kore until, discovering where she is, Demeter curses the earth, making it unfruitful. The Olympian deities finally, in despair, cause Kore to be released from the underworld for two-thirds of each year and to return to her mother, at which time the earth becomes fruitful again. During the rest of the year Kore is Queen of the Underworld.

There are certain significant parallels in these two myths of the sacrificed maiden. In each myth there is a trinity of goddesses, i.e., Hainuwele, Satena, and Rabia; Demeter, Persephone, and Hekate, who are identified with food

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[65]Campbell, p. 176.

plants, the fruitfullness of the earth, and with the underworld. In each case, these rites insure the growth of plants and the passage of the soul to the land of the dead. Eating and death are ritualistically connected, as birth and death are mythologically connected in the figure of the Great Goddess. The maiden figure seems to represent the seed which must die and be buried, i.e., go underground, before new life can come. Hainuwele is murdered, buried, and food grows from her body. Rabia and Persephone undergo a marriage of death, descend underground and return again bringing with them grain or the moon. The moon, like the seed, dies each month and is reborn as a new moon; and the moon is related to the rhythmic fertility of woman and the earth.

The pig and serpent figure prominently in each mythologem, and Campbell suggests that the pig image replaces the serpent as the sacred animal of the labyrinth and is itself replaced by the bull, and the bull by the horse.[66] The antiquity and ubiquity of the serpent image has been mentioned, as well as the connection between the pig and the Pregnant Vegetation Goddess.

> . . . Through her association with the pig, the beautifully draped Demeter with bare breasts, the queen of corn, the bread-giver and the queen of the dead (manifested as her daughter Persephone) can be connected with her predecessor, the prehistoric Vegetation Goddess.[67]

Persephone herself was called "Pherrephata," "Killer of

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[66]Campbell, p. 197. [67]Gimbutas, p. 214.

suckling pigs," by the Athenians. The pig was so important that when Eleusis issued its own coinage in 350-27 B. C., the pig was chosen as the symbol of the mysteries.[68] Both pig and serpent appear in the ancient Greek festival of Thesmophoria. This was a three-day autumnal rite connected with sowing, which was performed exclusively by women and dated at least from the pre-Homeric, Pelasgian period when Cretan culture was flowering; and Cretan culture grew out of the mythology of Old Europe. The women fasted for nine days in memory of Demeter's mourning and search for Persephone. The festival itself had three parts: Kathodos (downgoing) and Anodos (uprising), Nestera (fasting), and Kalligeneia (fair-born or fair-birth). On the first day women, purified by the fasting, went down into an underground chamber, or megara, and brought up bones and rotted pig flesh which had been placed underground on the last day of the preceding year's festival. This was mixed with seed and would assure a good crop. The original ritual may have been one of sympathetic magic in which the sacrificial pig is like a fertility charm which, being placed in the earth, makes the earth fertile. Since the pig is the double of the Pregnant Vegetation Goddess and the tropical cultures record the actual sacrifice of a maiden, it is possible that pigs were substituted for an earlier human sacrifice.

The underground chamber was said to be guarded by

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[68]Jane Harrison, Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), p. 153.

serpents which consumed the pig flesh and must be frightened away by a rattling noise when the women descended. The women then threw down figures of serpents and men made of flour and wheat, and sometimes fir cones, on account of the fertility of the tree, into the chamber to appease the serpents. The second day was one of strict fasting, imitating Demeter sitting on the Smileless Stone and in sympathy with the earth's desolation. And on the third day pigs were taken down in preparation for the next year's rites.

There is another related ancient rite called Skirophoria, in which young maidens, clothed in white, at night are given sacred objects (skira) which were figurines of suckling pigs and cakes made in the shape of serpents. After the festival these objects were put in Demeter's temple. Campbell suggests that these grain images and cakes were originally a sacramental cannabalistic meal, as the pig was originally a human maiden. He strengthens this argument with several other parallels. In both the tropical and ancient Greek rituals the numbers three and nine, magical feminine numbers, are prominent. There is dancing or chanting in both rituals, a rattling noise is made to frighten away the snakes, there is chanting, the boom of drums and the hum of bull-roarers in the great Maro Dance; and spiral, labyrinth choral dances are found in both traditions. Demeter holding a staff-torch when leaving Olympus is reminiscent of Satena holding the arms of Hainuwele when leaving the people of the mythological age. Serpent imagery is prominent in both mythologies.

Hainuwele's father has a cloth with a serpent on it with which he covers the coconut, which his pig found in the water, and then he plants it. It grows into a palm tree and when some of his blood falls on a leaf, Hainuwele is formed and he covers her with the cloth. In the Greek myth Okeanos, with whose daughters Persephone is playing, is the uroboric serpent biting his tail, and is an early counterpart of Hades, who is pictured as a serpent, suggesting that Persephone is the serpent's bride. Campbell concludes that the two mythologies are derived from a single base in which greater prominence was given to the great cosmic serpent who is the spouse of the maiden.[69]

In the figures of Hainuwele and Persephone, the sacrificed and immolated maiden, one aspect of the transformative character of the feminine is seen, namely, transformation through death. Hainuwele and Persephone are connected with the moon and the seed which must die in order to be transformed into a new cycle of renewed fertility. Persephone and Hainuwele's sister Rabia, as well as the later Psyche,[70] enter into a marriage of death and meet their mates underground before they can reemerge transfigured. The "single base" of these mythologies which Campbell discovered points to another type of transformation, a transformation through love and pleasure. The heroine of the Polynesian myth of the

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[69]Campbell, p. 189.

[70]Erich Neumann, Amor and Psyche, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956).

serpent and the maiden is the passionate, beautiful, and completely unashamed Hina, who can still be seen today in the markings of the moon. Hina was the wife of the Monster Eel (a tropical serpent) Te Tuna, whose name means the Phallus, but she tired of him and went looking for a new lover. She found the favorite trickster hero of Polynesia, Maui, and lived with him until social pressure forced the two males to fight. In the ensuing contest, Maui defeated Te Tuna and cut off his head, which his mother instructed him to bury and out of which grew the coconut, not known before to earth-people.[71]

The mythologem of the origin of the food plant which occurs through burial of a sacrificed victim is here, but the fruitful conflict is brought about through the sexual desire of the beautiful moon-maiden Hina. Here is a theme which is echoed in the Biblical figure of Eve as seductress: the maiden who is sexually inquisitive and brings about a significant event which transforms the human experience. But Hina is not condemned for it as Eve was. Campbell summarizes the basic elements of the serpent and maiden myth in this way:

> . . . (1) the young woman ready for marriage (the nymph) associated with the mysteries of birth and menstruation, these mysteries (and the womb itself, therefore) being identified with the lunar force; (2) the fructifying masculine semen identified with the waters of the earth and sky and imaged in the phallic, waterlike, lightninglike serpent by which the maiden is to be transformed; and (3) an experience of life as change, transformation, death, and new birth.[72]

This is a description of a feminine mode of experience which is

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[71]Campbell, pp. 191-95. [72]Campbell, p. 390.

at the heart of these mythological motifs. In its highest form it expresses the transformative moon wisdom of death and rebirth. The human experience of death and birth is analogous to the waning and waxing of the moon. The burial and fructification of the seed is analogous to the dark shadow which overcomes and then releases the moon. The moon sloughs off its dark skin of death as the snake sloughs off its old skin and is born again. The plant cycle and lunar cycle are seen as parallel to the human generational cycle, and ultimately to the psychic agony/ecstasy cycle of spiritual rebirth. All these cyclical rhythms are ruled by the Great Goddess of Periodic Regeneration, who really gives birth to the universe and really withdraws it back into herself, as is fully expressed in the Tantric conception of the Goddess.

> . . . The Snake Goddess and Bird Goddess create the world, charge it with energy, and nourish the earth and its creatures with the life-giving element conceived as water. The waters of heaven and earth are under their control. The Great Goddess emerges miraculously out of death, out of the sacrificial bull, and in her body the new life begins. She is not the Earth, but a female human, capable of transforming herself into many living shapes, a doe, dog, toad, bee, butterfly, tree or pillar.[73]

Lest this all seem too easy an answer to the terrifying experience of death, it must be remembered that the Goddess gives birth in pain and people die in pain. People are not always eager to release their bodily form and transform into another body. The caterpillar does not know of its incipient

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[73]Gimbutas, p. 236.

change, Hainuwele did not offer herself for sacrifice, Persephone did not volunteer to marry Hades, the Goddess is sometimes reluctant. One example from the tropical planting mythology of the Aztecs will illustrate this point.

> . . . as the goddess Tlalteutli was walking alone upon the face of the primordial waters--a great and wonderful maiden, with eyes and jaws at every joint that could see and bite like animals--she was spied by the two primary gods Quetzalcoatl (the Plumed Serpent) and Tezcatlipoca (the Smoking Mirror); whereupn, deciding that they should create the world of her, they transformed themselves into mighty serpents and came at her from either side. One seized her from the right hand to the left foot, the other from the left hand to the right foot, and together they ripped her asunder. From the parts they fashioned not only the earth and heavens, but also the gods. And then to comfort the goddess for what had happened to her, all the gods came down and, paying her obeisance, commanded that there should come from her all the fruits that men require for their life. And so, from her hair they made trees, flowers, and grass; from her eyes springs, fountains, and the little caves; from her mouth rivers and the great caves; from her nose valleys, and from her shoulders mountains. But the goddess wept all night, for she had a craving to consume human hearts. And she would not be quiet until they were brought to her. Nor would she bear fruit until she had been drenched with human blood.[74]

[74]Campbell, pp. 224-25.

Chapter 5

TANTRIC CONCEPTION OF THE GODDESS

One of the most clearly articulated, sophisticated, and profound expressions of the feminine archetype is found in the Tantric tradition of India. The roots of Goddess worship stretch back into the unknown era of the tropical planting cultures which were discussed in chapter 4. And yet the Goddess, in many names and forms, is still worshipped in India today.[1] The images of the immolated and sacrificed maiden and the serpent which give insight into the transformative process of death and rebirth, and the image of the elementary Great Mother who gives birth to and destroys the universe is expressed throughout Indian religious tradition, but is particularly found in the scriptures, hymns, prayers, philosophical works, and practices of the Śākta Tantras. This chapter will focus on the early worship of the Goddess, the meaning of Tantra, symbols of the Goddess in the Śākta Tantra, specifically the symbols Śakti and Mother, and the practical Tantric spiritual path which expresses the matriarchal

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[1]Two twentieth-century women in India who were worshipped and addressed as Mother, Śri Sarada Devī, the wife of Śri Ramakrishna, and Mira Richard, the Mother of Śri Aurobindo's ashram, show that worship of the Goddess is continually evolving.

transformative wisdom. Chapter 6 will then look at one particular Tantric text, the Devī Māhātmyam, in depth in order to see the picture of the Goddess in detail.

Early Worship of the Goddess

There seem to be four major stages in the cultural development of early India. Archaeological evidence shows a neolithic culture from at least the fourth millennium, which seems to have been connected with Iran, since similar pottery styles are found in both areas. Also, there was a series of crude female statuettes, some associated with figures of the bull and with the familiar motifs of the zigzag, meander, lozenge, and double-axe, such as were found throughout the Mesopotamian mythogenetic area.[2]

The second stage is most clearly seen in the matriarchal Indus Valley cities of Mohenjo-daro, Chanhu-daro, and Harappa (c. 2500-1000 B. C.). Among the distinctly Indian elements are two stamp seals which show figures seated in a meditative posture, one surrounded by serpents and one by other animals. These seem to be prototypes of the yogi, seen in later figures of Śiva and Buddha, both of whom are associated with the serpent. There is also a beautifully cast, copper, nude, female dancer, as well as hundreds of small female statues, dating from the third millennium B. C.[3] In later

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[2]Joseph Campbell, Masks of God: Primitive Mythology (New York: Vintage Press, 1959), p. 435.

[3]Campbell, p. 437.

times the Goddess is described as the dancer of this dance of Life, Līlā, which may be prefigured here. There are also many simple sexual symbols, i.e., cone-shaped phallic stones (male) and circular stones with a hollow center (female), which prefigure the Tantric lingam and yoni, symbols of Śiva (lingam) and Devī (yoni). The cult of the Goddess is clearly evidenced here.

> Among the leading elements of this suddenly revealed native Indian mythogenetic complex we may number: the serpent, as a development of the primitive proto-neolithic monster serpent of the tropical planters; the yogi, as a higher transformation of the shamanistic techniques and experiences of ecstasis; the goddess, though in what way or to what degree differently conceived and developed from the goddess of the Mediterranean sphere we cannot say; and the abstract symbol of sexual union (lingam and yoni in conjunction) as a primary symbol of the divine connubium through which the world is simultaneously generated and dissolved.[4]

The third stage is marked by invasions of patriarchal Vedic Āryans from the West about the middle of the second millennium; the same time as their cousins, the Homeric Greeks and Semetic Hebrews, were invading Eastern Europe. The Āryans destroyed the higher civilizations of the Indus Valley cities and the male gods of these nomadic herding peoples overcame the goddess of the soil-rooted city states. Since these people did not write or build in stone, there is only uncertain evidence for this period.

During the fourth stage, about 500 B. C.-500 A. D., the basic Indian scriptures, e.g., the Vedas, Brāhmanas, Upanisads, Mahābhārata, and Rāmāyana, were written down; and the

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[4]Campbell, p. 437.

basic structures of Hinduism and Buddhism were formed from the comingling of the Āryan Vedic and Dravidian Harappan cults. The cult of the Goddess seems to be connected with both the Vedic and early Harappan threads of culture and religion, though it may be that the Vedic recognition of the Goddess is already the result of Āryan absorption of the native Indian mythogenetic complex. It is this complex which Sir John Woodroffe, the eminent twentieth-century translator and scholar of the Tantras, indicates.

> . . . The worship of the Great Mother, the Magna Mater of the Near East, the Ādyā Śakti of the Śākta Tantras, is in its essentials . . . one of the oldest and most widespread religions of the world, and one which in India was possibly, in its origins, independent of the Brāhmaṇic religion as presented to us in the Vaidik Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas.[5]

Though She does not originate and is not prominent in the Vedas, her presence is felt, for She appears as Devī-Mātā, Mother of the Gods, Aditī, Parameṣṭhī, Rātrī, and Virāj (the Cosmic Cow).[6] The earliest written literature does not talk of her very much. There are Vedic hymns to Uṣas, goddess of the Dawn, to Rātrī, goddess of the Night, and to Devī, but there are many more hymns addressed to male gods. Much later in the Mahābhārata the names of the Goddess are known, but the hymns to her are later insertions into the text. It is not until the development of the Purāṇas and Tantras that Devī

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[5]Sir John Woodroffe, Śakti and Śākta (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1918), p. 223.

[6]See the discussion of the Vedic concept of Devī in chapter 6, pp. 144-50.

emerges from a millennium of patriarchal suppression.

Then come the hymns of Harivaṃśa and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa with descriptions of Kālīdāsa, the servant of Kālī, the Devī Māhātmyam, and early Tantric rituals. Historically, during this period, it is not strange that worship of the Goddess declined from prominence for 1500 years, for this occurred throughout the world. What is strange is that she reappeared in India. This reappearance can be seen in the Tantric śāstras which began to be written down by about the third century A. D. The reason for the silence may be the predominance of an oral tradition which would make writing irrelevant. Or it may be that Sanskrit was the predominant written language in vogue and those who worshipped the Goddess did not know Sanskrit. Those versed in Āryan Sanskrit, with its patriarchal cultural emphasis, may have been either uninterested or hostile to the concept of the Goddess. By the third century A. D., however, Sanskrit had become a universal language of India. The pre-Āryan beliefs and practices had permeated Āryan culture, and scriptures began to be written down. However, even where written texts are available, undue emphasis must not be given to their presence as the sole evidence of religious practice, due to the importance of oral tradition in early culture.

DEVELOPMENT OF TANTRA

It is in the Tantric scriptures that the cult of the Goddess comes to fullest expression, both philosophically and devotionally. These scriptures represent an ancient thread,

for Tantric thought and practices have permeated Hindu consciousness from at least pre-Buddhistic times. The word 'tantra' comes from the Sanskrit root 'tan,' meaning 'to spread, extend, multiply,' and the suffix 'tran,' that which 'saves.' In the words of Swami Prabhavananda, ". . . Tantra literally means that which saves by that which spreads; or loosely rendered, spread the scriptures and save mankind."[7] The word 'tantra' may also be related to the concepts of weaving, as fabric is composed of threads spread or woven in a particular fashion. In fact, in the tantric conception, the entire universe appears to be a vast fabric of magical forces, including the human body in which these forces reside and can be awakened. Tantra refers to the warp and woof of the fabric which is commonly called reality, which is composed of the interweaving of the three threads called guṇas which form prakṛti (matter), the Goddess.

The Tantras are the śāstras of the Āgama. The word 'śāstra,' meaning 'scripture,' comes from the root 'śās,' meaning 'to control.' It refers to those teachings whose aim is to control the conduct of people otherwise prone to evil.

In the Brāhaminical scriptures or śāstras there are traditionally considered to be four classes: Veda or Śruti, Smṛti, Purāṇa, and Āgama. These four śāstras are related to different periods of time, culture, and development, since

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[7]Swami Prabhavānanda, The Spiritual Heritage of India (Hollywood: Vedanta Press, 1969), p. 80.

what is necessary in a particular time and place changes as circumstances change.[8] The Āgamas, as they are called now,[9] arose about the close of the age of the Upaniṣads, and they deal with worship of Saguṇa Īśvara, that is, Brahman considered with attributes, guṇas, seen as personal, Īśvara, and therefore able to be worshipped by a devotee. Nirguna Brahman, the ultimate, transcendent, attributeless Brahman, which is the main subject of the Upaniṣads, cannot be worshipped, since neither worshipper nor object of worship exists within the undifferentiated state of ultimate Being. It seems that as the Upaniṣads continued the wisdom (jñana) teachings of the Vedas, and the Brāhmaṇas continued the ritualistic teachings of the Vedas, the Āgamas continued the esoteric teachings and practices of the Vedic mystics. The Āgamas are more popular in orientation than the Upaniṣads, that is, they are directed toward the common person who still lives in the world and struggles with its problems, who has not yet a highly developed

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[8]These four śāstras are related to four ages or yugas which are only a fraction of a Kalpa or Day of Brahmā, said to last 4,320,000,000 years.

"A Mahāyuga is composed of the Four Ages called Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, Kali, the first being the golden age of righteousness since when all has gradually declined physically, morally, and spiritually. For each of the ages a suitable Śāstra is given, for Satya or Kṛta the Vedas, for Tretā the Smṛtiśāstra, for Dvāpara the Purāṇas, and for Kaliyuga the Āgama or Tantra Śāstra." Woodroffe, p. 5.

[9]At an earlier date the word 'āgama' referred to the Vedas, as can be seen in the grammar of Patanjali, where he uses 'Āgamas' as 'Vedas.' However, as more Tantra Śāstras were written and became popular, the word 'Āgama' came to refer to the Tantras and 'Nigamas' to the Vedas.

power of discrimination and vairagya, unattchment to loss and gain, pleasure and pain. Most people are attached, even glued, to things of this world, and need a practical teaching through which they can accept themselves as they are and develop, through sādhanā (spiritual practice), toward greater consciousness. The Āgamas, unlike the Vedas, are open to all castes and to women, so they include many people excluded from the Āryan Vedic culture.

There are various theories as to the origin of Tantric thought and practice, which it is at least difficult and perhaps impossible to discern. Most of the theories, however, are prejudiced by a bias against Tantra, based on misunderstanding of some of its more extreme, and sometimes misused, practices. These theories would not like to view Tantra as indigenously Indian, but see it as a later development of Buddhism brought back into India, or as stemming from 'barbarous' non-Āryan races. There are those who hold that Tantra originally branched off from the Vajrayāna cult of Buddhism and returned to India, importing exotic and strange notions from Tibet, China, and other countries. This theory does not account for the presence of basic Tantric practices in the Vedas, particularly the Atharva-Veda. It also does not recognize the tradition expressed by Kulluka Bhaṭṭa, celebrated commentator of the Laws of Manu, that Śruti is of two kinds: Vedic and Tantrik.[10]

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[10]Woodroffe, p. 53. "Vaidikī tantrikī caiva dvividhā Śrutiḥ Kīrtita."

A second theory attributes the development of Tantra to the barbarous races which were not "spiritualized" by the Vedic Āryans. Mircea Eliade points out that Tantra developed particularly on the two border regions of India, on the northwestern side by the Afghan border and in western Bengal and Assam, and also in the heart of Dravidian southern India. Thus, he says, at first:

> . . . tantrism developed in provinces that had been but little Hinduized, where the spiritual counteroffensive of the aboriginal inhabitants was in full force.[11]

These "aboriginal inhabitants" are perhaps the developers of the sophisticated Harappan culture which predates Āryan invasions by at least a thousand years, but in Eliade, and others who hold this view, there is an implicit prejudice identifying the Āryan cult as civilized and the non-Āryan cults as barbarous. This is similar to the kind of bias expressed in the Middle Ages of Europe against the witch cult. This prejudice discounts the theory of a native Indian mythogenetic complex, proposed by Campbell, with highly developed shamans and a cult of the Goddess which later profitably merged with the Vedic Āryans in creating potent forms, methods, and insights into spirituality. These insights have become the primary wellspring of spiritual understanding for the Far East for 2000 years and have been, in the last few hundred years, revitalizing the West. Also, these theories of the importation of

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[11]Mircea Eliade, Yoga, Immortality and Freedom (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 201.

Tantric ideas from either Buddhist or solely non-Āryan sources do not account for the pervasiveness of Tantra in everyday Indian religious life.

A third theory, proposed by Sir John Woodroffe and the Vedantic monthly The Prabuddha Bharata, sees Tantra as a bold new synthesis of religious insights, a legitimate restatement of Vedic religion and culture which is struggling with the new problems and difficulties of a new age, i.e., what is traditionally called the Kali Yuga. This theory points out that in early times there were many people who were restricted from participation in Vedic ritual and sacrifice because of their sex or caste, and yet who needed spiritual guidance. There seem to have been Upaniṣadic groups of anchorites who worked with these people, attempting to Āryanise (spiritualize!) them. Out of these encounters a system of spiritual discipline grew up around the Upaniṣadic philosophy of Pañcaupāsana, i.e., the five-fold worship of Śiva, Devī, the Sun, Ganeśa, and Viṣṇu. This worship included bīja mantra, Vedic incantation, and meditative processes, and seems to be the earliest configuration of Tantric practice. It is pre-Buddhist.

> . . . Thus the growth of these new communities and their occupation of the whole land constituted a mighty event that had been silently taking place in India on the outskirts of the daily shrinking orthodoxy of Vedic ritualism, long before Buddhism appeared on the field. . . . The traditional Kali Yuga dates from the rise of these communities and the Vedic religious cult of the preceding Yuga underwent a wonderful transformation along with a wonderful attempt it made to Aryanise these rising communities.[12]

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[12]Woodroffe, p. 116.

Then Buddhism arose in the sixth century B. C. to reform Vedic ritualism and, in its rejection of Vedic rites, it also rejected the Tantric disciplines. But, within four centuries, orthodox Buddhism was overtaken by Tantric worship, reemerging as the Māhāyana sect. The Tantric influence on Buddhism rendered it less monastic and more open, through worship, images, mantra, and yantra, to the common people of both sexes and all castes. This seems to be the most pervasive theory of the origins of Tantra, pointing to a dual source: the Āryan Vedic teachings and the Dravidian Harappa cult, particularly the cult of the Goddess. The Tantras or Āgamas then arose, partly because of the declining influence of the Vedic Ācara, and partly because of increasing numbers of people not eligible for Vedic rituals who needed spiritual guidance.

There are five classes of Āgamas, divided according to the deity worshipped: Śaiva Āgamas, worshipping Śiva; Śakti Āgamas, worshipping Śakti or Devī; Vaishanana Āgamas (or Pancharatra) worshipping Viṣṇu; Saurya Āgamas, worshipping the Sun God Surya; and Ganapatya Āgamas, worshipping Ganapati. The Śākta tantra, which gives the fullest picture of Devī, the Goddess, and which will primarily be considered here, is just one school or sect of Tantra. Though all sects are theoretically open, in practice they are exclusive, and only the Śākta Āgamas are open to all castes and both sexes.[13] A process of

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[13]In the Vedic teachings there are four stages of life, Āśramas, i.e., student, householder, forest recluse, and mendicant. All four Āśramas were open to the priestly (Brāhmin)

discrimination is carried on, however, for there is the Tantric doctrine of capacity, adhikāri, which recognizes the differences between types of people and their stages of development, recommends certain practices for certain people, and restricts other practices. These distinctions are not based on birth, i.e., caste or sex, but on the capabilities and needs of each particular person.

The Tantric texts seem to appear from about the third century A. D., to become quite popular about the fourth century, and are the vogue, dominating India from the sixth century. Tantra is a pan-Indian religious movement, found in Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Kashmirian Śivaism, and Viṣṇuist devotion. Even so, it is difficult to date these texts.

> It is not possible to fix with any finality the date of the inception of the vast literature of the Tantra. Some of the main texts are determined to have been compiled in their present form during the Gupta period while some are comparatively recent. Whatever it be, certain it is that the tradition and the practice they seek to embody is much older.[14]

Whether the texts can be precisely dated or not, it is clear that the tradition of Goddess worship in India is quite ancient, dating back at least to 2500 B. C., with indications

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caste, the first three to the warrior (Kṣattriya) caste, the first two to the merchant (Vaiśya) caste, and the second only to the servant (Śūdra) caste. However, the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, first published in 1876, states that in the Kali Yuga only two Āśramas are possible, the householder and the mendicant, and these are open to everyone.

[14] M. P. Pandit, Lights on the Tantras (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1971), p. 2.

that reach back into the neolithic culture of the fourth millennium. Not only is worship of the Goddess ancient, but there seems to be a continuity in the worship over the centuries in India:

> . . . there is nothing fundamentally new in the worship of the Devi; it is in line with the Vedic religious worship which celebrates the eminence of Deities like Aditi, the Infinite embodied Mother of all the Gods, Saraswati the Goddess of Inspiration and Knowledge and other Goddesses. It is neither a new departure nor a violent go-back. It is a continuation of the same tradition which is to be found in the Vedas, as indeed in all the religions of the ancient world of that Age.[15]

And, while this worship became invisible under the patriarchal Vedic culture for over a thousand years, by the second or third century A. D., the cult of Devī had emerged again into the dominant culture through the Tantric teachings and practices of both Buddhism and Hinduism.

> . . . for the first time in the spiritual history of Aryan India, the Great Goddess acquires a predominant position. Early in the second century of our era, two feminine divinities made their way into Buddhism: Prajñāpāramitā, a 'creation' of the metaphysicians and ascetics, an incarnation of Supreme Wisdom, and Tārā, the epiphany of the Great Goddess of aboriginal India. In Hinduism the Śakti, the 'cosmic force,' is raised to the rank of a Divine Mother who sustains not only the universe and all its beings but also the many and various manifestations of the god. Here we recognize the 'religion of the Mother' that in ancient times reigned over an immense Aegeo-Afrasiatic territory and which was always the chief form of devotion among the autochthonous peoples of India.[16]

Though in this chapter the focus is on the cult of Devī in Indian religion, specifically as it is expressed in

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[15]Pandit, p. 5. [16]Eliade, p. 202.

the Śākta Tantra, it should be clearly noted that the Devī cult is, as Eliade says, simply one instance of the 'religion of the Mother' which was found in all civilized areas of the world before the patriarchal invasions destroyed the people and established supremacy of the Father God. It was mainly in India that She could not be completely destroyed but reemerged with great clarity and power, revitalizing the masculine religious tradition which has a tendency to become ascetic and other-worldly. The Judeo-Christian tradition was more successful than the Vedic in expunging the Goddess from their midst and allowing worship of the Father alone.

SYMBOLS OF THE GODDESS IN ŚĀKTA TANTRA

"They worship Her who is Eternal Life--the Mother who is seated on the couch of Śivas (Mahāpreta), in the Isle of Gems (Maṇidvīpa), in the 'Ocean of Nectar,' which is all Being-Consciousness and Bliss."[17]

All of the symbols of the Goddess in the Śākta Tantras could be included within two main images: Mother and Śakti. However, within the many scriptures, hymns, prayers, and doctrines, as within the hearts of Her devotees, She takes on many forms, names, colors, shapes, and vibrations, through which She shines forth, resplendent. It would be a disservice to the sophistication and depth of insight expressed in the Tantras, not to attempt to display the multi-dimensional figure which they set forth in Her complex and mysterious chimerical forms.

The preliminary observation which must be made is that

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[17] Woodroffe, p. 215.

through all the faces and forms which serve to express Her nature, the affirmation is made repeatedly that there is only one Goddess behind all this. She is One. In the words of Śri Aurobindo, the great twentieth-century Indian mystic-philosopher who was a devotee of the Divine Mother:

> . . . The One whom we adore as the Mother is the divine Consciousness Force that dominates all existence, one and yet so many-sided that to follow her movement is impossible even for the quickest mind and for the freest and most vast intelligence.[18]

She is not only the One behind the perceptible material world, but She is even the One source of all the divine beings worshipped or unknown to human beings.

> . . . Just as one moon reflects itself in innumerable waters, so Devī, the 'Goddess,' by whatever other names she may be otherwise called, is the embodiment of all Gods and of all 'energies' (Śaktis) of the Gods.[19]

She is the source of the mystery of the One and the Many, as She stands as One behind the Many. To the mundane consciousness of most people who see only the many differing and changing phenomena of existence, She seems not One but Many also. This is the illusion penetrated by the seeker.

> The Natural, which is the manifestation of the Mother of Nature, and the Spiritual or the Mother as She is in and by Herself are one, but the initiate alone truly recognizes this unity.[20]

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[18]Sri Aurobindo, The Mother (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972), p. 19.

[19]Prof. Winternitz, "The Tantras and Religion of the Śāktas," Woodroffe, p. 77.

[20]Woodroffe, p. 88.

There is another sense in which the Goddess is One, and that is in reference to the androgenous figure of Śiva-Śakti united, inseparable, before the creation of the universe. This symbolism is made explicit in the statue of Śiva Ardhanarisvara which is physically hermaphroditic, male on the right side and female on the left, both in one. In the alogical, transcendent state, Śiva represents the pure, unchanging, inactive Consciousness, and Śakti represents the energy, power, or activity of this Consciousness. But these two are never separate. Sri Ramakrishna explains this through the analogy of fire. People say that fire burns, and to the analyzing mind these two can be separated into fire and burning. But in actuality burning is always inseparably connected with fire; they are not two things. Similarly, in the supreme state Consciousness and its Power are never separate. In the Tantras Śiva says constantly to Devī: "There is no difference between Thee and Me." Power is active Consciousness, but in the supreme state in which there is no activity, they rest together.

> . . . Śiva is the Power-Holder, who is Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and Śakti is Power and the Becoming. She, in the alogical state, is also Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Without ceasing to be in Herself what She ever was, is and will be, She is now the Power of Śiva as efficient and material cause of the Universe and the Universe itself. Whilst Śiva represents the Consciousness aspect of the Real, She is its aspect as Mind, Life, and Matter. He is the Liberation (Mokṣa) aspect of the Real. She is in the form of the Universe or Samsāra. As Śiva-Śakti are in themselves one, so Mokṣa and Samsāra are at root one.[21]

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[21] Woodroffe, p. 265.

This transcendent state before creation is inconceivable, since it precedes the subject-object dualism essential to knowledge, and therefore it is quite difficult to understand the paradoxical origin of the Many from the One. Śiva is pictured as having two aspects, changeless in relation to Himself, and changing through His association with Śakti.

> . . . In the Āgama, the one Śiva is both the changeless Paraśiva and Paraśakti and really changing Śiva-Śakti or universe. As Śiva is one with Himself, He is never associated with anything but Himself. As, however, the Supreme He is undisplayed (Śiva-Śakti Svarūpa) and as Śiva-Śakti He is manifest in the form of the universe and of mind and matter.[22]

The process of creation described in the Tantras, then, is not dualistic in the sense of a Creator who creates a universe separate from Himself, but is an evolutionary process of manifestation, the results being non-different from the cause. This differs from a Christian view which maintains a distinct separation between the Creator and the created universe.

At this point it is important to delineate clearly what Śakti is, as She brings the universe into manifestation and differentiates Herself into Cit-Śakti, illuminating consciousness, and Māyā-Śakti, veiling consciousness. The word 'Śakti' comes from the Sanskrit root 'śak' meaning 'to be able, to have power.' This can be applied to any form of activity, for example, the power to see is visual śakti, the power to burn is the śakti of fire. All forms of activity are ultimately reducible to the Primordial Śakti, Ādyā-Śakti. Śakti as power or

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22Woodroffe, p. 191.

energy does not imply anything that is unreal, unless the real is defined as that which is unchanging, as Śaṁkara does. For the Śākta all things are real, it is just that some change and some do not. The question of the nature of the unreal will become more clear if comparison is made of the three main systems of Indian thought: Sāṁkhya, Śaṁkara's Vedanta, and Śākta Tantra, in regard to their concepts of Prakṛti, Māyā, and Śakti respectively.

Each of these systems of thought recognizes a static and a kinetic aspect of the universe in dealing with the question of the One and the Many. For Sāṁkhyan philosophy, these two principles are Puruṣa (spirit) and Prakṛti (matter). For Śaṁkara they are Brahman (the Absolute), and Māyā (Illusion). For the Śākta they are Śiva and Śakti. The kinetic aspect of reality, Prakṛti, Māyā, and Śakti, is everywhere the same in that it is a finitizing principle which is always present with the principle of infinite, formless consciousness, i.e., Puruṣa, Brahman, and Śiva.

The Sāṁkhyan system is essentially dualistic, positing:

> . . . 1. that the universe is founded on an irresoluble dichotomy of 'life-monads' (puruṣa) and lifeless 'matter' (prakṛti), 2. that 'matter' (prakṛti), though fundamentally simple and uncompounded, nevertheless exfoliates, or manifests itself, under three distinctly differentiated aspects (the so-called guṇas), which are comparable to the three strands of a rope.[23]

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[23]Heinrich Zimmer, Philosophies of India, ed. Joseph Campbell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 281.

The principle of puruṣa is related to the masculine, and the principle of prakṛti to the feminine. Prakṛti, then, is the name given to that out of which all matter, the objective universe, evolves; but it can never be directly perceived, any more than the protons and neutrons of the atom postulated by modern science can. This prakṛti is composed of three component factors or constituents, the three guṇas, which are interdependent and cannot be separated from each other. The guṇas are in a state of equilibrium until prakṛti begins to differentiate Herself, and then they are moving in the unending play and interplay of sattwa (light, purity), rajas (activity, movement, passion), and tamas (darkness, inertia, blindness).

Prakṛti is complex, dynamic, active, all-pervasive, and continually undergoing change, until She goes back to rest at the end of a cosmic evolutionary cycle. Puruṣa, however, is simple, static, and passive, without form or content (since these belong to prakṛti), unattached, without contact, indifferent, unconcerned, and uninvolved. In the Sāṁkhyan tradition these principles of Puruṣa, formless consciousness, and Prakṛti, formative activity, are two independent realities, ever-existing, neither subordinate to the other, though all consciousness belongs to the unchanging Puruṣa and Prakṛti is inconscient, blindly active matter.

But for Śaṁkara, who is an absolute non-dualist, there cannot be two independent realities. Māyā is reduced to an illusory appearance which is not a second reality.

> . . . But, whereas, Prakṛti is an independent Reality, Māyā is something which is neither real (Sat) nor unreal (Asat) nor partly real and partly unreal (Sadasat), and which, though not forming part of Brahman, and therefore not Brahman, is yet, though not a second reality, inseparably associated and sheltering with, Brahman (Māyā Brahmāśrita) in one of its aspects: owing what false appearance of reality it has, to the Brahman with which it is so associated.[24]

Śaṁkara describes Māyā as an Eternal Falsity, which is unthinkable, alogical, and unexplainable. Māyā is not a negative entity, but is positive in the sense of being a power which limits or veils consciousness. But it is the great "Unexplained" which is in itself and unknown. Its presence is experienced, but its origin is forever hidden in mystery. It only stands for a lapsed condition, but is not of the transcendent Brahman though experienced within its frame as an appearance.

> . . . In short, Prakṛti and Māyā are like the materia prima of the Thomistic philosophy, the finitizing principle; the activity which 'measures out' (Miyate), that is limits and makes forms in the formless (cit). The devotee Kamalākānta lucidly and consicisely calls Māyā, the form of the Formless.[25]

There is, then, in Śaṁkara what may be called the doctrine of aspects. That is, in one aspect Brahman is associated with Māyā, and then is symbolized as Īśvara, Lord, and in another aspect Brahman is not associated with Māyā, and is named Parabrahman. Brahman does not change in either aspect. This is crucial for Śaṁkara, since he has already defined the real as absolutely unchanging. For Brahman itself to change would

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[24] Woodroffe, p. 225. [25] Woodroffe, p. 226.

be to admit its unreality. However, the way in which the unchanging Brahman is related to Māyā, the unreal principle of change, unreal because it changes, is indeed mysterious and unexplained in Śaṁkara's system. But, though unexplained in a final sense, it is an experienced character.

In the Śākta system, there are also two aspects of the Divine Reality. But here it is said that Reality, Śiva, changes in one aspect, Śakti. That is, consciousness as such is named Śiva, and the modes of consciousness are named Śakti. There is no concept of unconscious Māyā as Śaṁkara teaches, but here both aspects are conscious. Indeed, "All is Consciousness" no matter how veiled it is by the unconscious.

> . . . As all is Śakti and as Śakti-svarūpa is Being-Consciousness-Bliss, there is, and can be, nothing absolutely unconscious.[26]

The Śākta doctrine eliminates nothing because there is no "false" māyā postulated. One's spirit or Ātmā is Śiva, one's mind/body complex are Śakti. And Śiva and Śakti are one, inseparable even in manifestation when there is a seeming difference.

> . . . The Jivātmā is Śiva-Śakti. So is the Paramātmā. The latter exists as one: the former as the manifold. Man is not then a Spirit covered by a non-Brahman falsity, but Spirit covering Itself with Its own power or Śakti.[27]

Thus Śiva's experience of Himself is Śakti. Śakti is Śiva displaying Himself to Himself, the mirror in which He sees Himself reflected. Śakti, therefore, cannot be unreal, since

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[26]Woodroffe, p. 191. [27]Woodroffe, p. 227.

Śiva is not unreal. The world is Śiva's experience of Himself, and therefore must be real, not illusory.

> . . . She is called Yogini because of Her connection with all things as their origin. It is this Original Power which is known in worship as Devī or Mother of Many Names. Those who worship the Mother, worship nothing 'illusory' or unconscious, but a Supreme Consciousness, whose body is all forms of consciousness-unconsciousness produced by Her as Śiva's power.[28]

The question then arises for the Śākta as to how the principle of unconsciousness is present, as is experienced in the world, if all is consciousness. The answer is found in the theory of veiling, limiting or finitizing, which is one function of Śakti, as it is of Prakṛti and Māyā also. In the Sāṁkhyan philosophy, it is a second, independent principle which veils the unchanging Puruṣa principle. In Śaṁkara's Vedanta, it is the non-Brahman Māyā which veils Brahman. In Śākta Advaitavāda it is consciousness which without ceasing to be Itself, veils Itself. The feminine principle in each system works through negation, contraction, and finitization. Her function in each system is the same, to make forms in the formless; and forms necessitate limits. It is She who sets the limits which allow form to exist, even as a fetus takes the limitation of a body in the mother's womb which allows it to take form and be born in this world. "It is the function of Śakti to negate," i.e., to negate consciousness and make it appear to Itself as unconscious. The feminine plays a similar

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[28] Woodroffe, pp. 227-28.

role in Christianity, but this negation is seen as morally evil and opposed to the exclusively positive character of God.

> . . . In truth the whole world is the Self whether as 'I' (Aham) or 'This' (Idam). The Self thus becomes its own object. It becomes object or form that it may enjoy dualistic experience. It yet remains what it was in its unitary blissful experience. This is the Eternal Play in which the Self hides and seeks itself.[29]

As seen from the point of view of a being in the world, all is Śakti. There is no need really to search out the Absolute Śiva, Brahman, Puruṣa, if there is insight into the nature of the phenomena of life.

> . . . We have no need to go in quest of the Absolute in and by itself, the Absolute dormant in its first and ultimate inertia, lying prostrate like a corpse; for the very life essence, the Energy, of the Absolute is manifest in everything around us, it is everywhere before our eyes, by virtue of the transforming power of the Goddess Śakti, the Mother.[30]

For to the Śākta, people are seen as Spirit covering itself with its own power, thus all is Spirit. Pure Spirit is found by piercing the covering, i.e., matter, because All is, quite literally, Brahman. This understanding makes the positive path of sādhanā, i.e., the conscious piercing through the experiences of life in order to reach and discover their divine core, a most productive path of spiritual growth. However, for the Śaṁkaran Vedantist, the experiences of life are illusion, Māyā, from the perspective of ultimate reality

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[29]Woodroffe, p. 229.

[30]Heinrich Zimmer, Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), pp. 207-8.

as Brahman, and must be rejected in one's struggle to discover the unchanging Brahman behind, and yet not participating in, the phenomena of existence. Hence, a more negative path must be adopted.

As Śakti manifests Herself, She assumes two predominant forms, Cit-Śakti, illuminating consciousness, and Māyā-Śakti, veiling consciousness. Cit-Śakti refers to the fact that all is in essence consciousness, Śiva, and this is not lost in the process of finite manifestation. This consciousness does not change, even when the wrappings or veilings around it seem to momentarily cover its light with unconsciousness. The recognition of Consciousness at the base of all phenomena, which implies that any finite thing can be a revelation of the Divine, as its light shines forth, is worshipped as Cit-Śakti in manifest form. As a woman who becomes pregnant and then becomes a mother does not cease to be a woman, though functioning as a mother; so pure Consciousness, Cit-Śakti, in giving birth to the world of forms through Her finitizing power as Māyā-Śakti, does not cease to be pure Consciousness. Cit-Śakti is the changeless Spirit manifesting the universe of Māyā-Śakti, as the elementary aspect of the feminine gives birth to the transformative aspect.

Some aspects of Śaṁkara's doctrine of Māyā have been examined. The Śākta teaching of Māyā-Śakti is different in that Māyā here is a form of Śakti, who is Śiva, who is Consciousness, which is real. Therefore, Māyā-Śakti is real, not ultimately illusory, as in Śaṁkara. "It is that aspect of

conscious power which conceals Itself to Itself."[31] Māyā-Śakti is the power whereby the One gives effect to its will to be many. She is composed of the three guṇas. In inorganic matter, She veils Cit-Śakti so completely through the tamasic guṇa that no consciousness appears. In more evolved beings, more of the sattvic guṇa is present so more consciousness is revealed, until in a liberated being pure consciousness shines through.

> . . . What there is, is Māyā-Śakti; that is Consciousness (Śakti is in itself such) veiling, as the Mother, Herself to herself as Her creation, the Jīva. . . . For mind is consciousness veiling itself in the forms of limitation of apparent unconsciousness.[32]

Māyā-Śakti is also the sense of difference or otherness which pervades consciousness. The question often arises of how what is apparent duality can be a unity, or of how to bridge the gap between the object and the self which perceives it. The Śākta's answer is:

> . . . Śakti which is the origin of, and is in all things has the power to veil Itself so that whilst in truth it is only seeing itself as object, it does not, as the created Jīva, perceive this but takes things to be outside and different from the self.[33]

Thus, Māyā-Śakti accounts for the finite limited experience of mundane consciousness, as well as for the full unchanging experience of illuminated consciousness, in a way which does not denigrate the body, time, or change. All are included, for all is consciousness.

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31 Woodroffe, p. 229. 32 Woodroffe, p. 199.

33 Woodroffe, p. 196.

> . . . Māyā to the Śākta is Śakti veiling Herself as Consciousness, but which, as being Śakti, is Consciousness. To the Śākta all that he sees is the Mother. All is Consciousness.[34]

The second major symbol used of the Great Goddess in the Tantras is the image of the Divine Mother. The word 'mātah,' mother, is related to the Sanskrit root 'mā,' meaning 'to measure,' and the suffix 'tṛch.' Thus, the Mother is she who measures out or gives form, enjoyment, and liberation. This clearly relates to Śakti's role as the finitizer who creates form in the formless. But for the Śākta, there is actually a kind of duomonotheism, one person worshipped in two aspects, as the Supreme Mother and Father.[35] She, in a sense, disengages Herself from His grasp and represents or displays Herself to Him as the world manifestation. She is the pure mirror of Śiva. Basically, however, She is worshipped as Mother:

> . . . Sādhakas of Śakti worship Brahman as Mother, for in the world the mother-aspect alone of Her who is Brahman is fully manifested. In the Yāmala, Śiva says: 'Devī may, My beloved, be thought of as female or male . . . but in truth She is neither a female, male, neuter being, nor an inanimate thing. But like the term Kalpavalli (a word in feminine gender denoting tree) feminine terms are attributed to Her.'[36]

It is not that the Śākta sees the absolute, immutable, transcendent Divine nature as female or male, for of course the Absolute is sexless. That is, the Divine is neither female,

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[34]Woodroffe, p. 108. [35]Woodroffe, p. 274.

[36]John Woodroffe, Hymn to the Goddess (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1973), p. 265.

male, hermaphrodite, nor unconscious thing. But as the Absolute becomes relative, comes into manifestation as the world, then It reveals its character as producer, maintainer, nourisher, and destroyer, which is then symbolized as the Mother aspect. It is logically no more absurd to symbolize the Divine as Mother than as Father, which is done constantly and exclusively in the West. This Mother aspect of the Divine then is active in the world, immanent in all manifestation and can be recognized and experienced as such. There are particular forms in which the Mother is seen, but actually as Śakti, energy, She is the matter and form of which everything is made. For the devotee:

> The Divine Mother first appears in and as Her worshipper's earthly mother, then as his wife; thirdly as Kālikā, She reveals Herself in old age, disease and death. . . . Lastly She takes to Herself the dead body in the fierce tongues of flame which light the funeral pyre.[37]

However:

> . . . Indeed to the enlightened Śākta the whole universe is Strī or Śakti. 'Aham strī' as the Advaahāvano Upaniṣad says.[38]

"Aham strī," "I am She" and all that is, is also She. Clearly, this doctrine does not refer to a suffragette Goddess who rules the sky surrounded by members of a celestial feminist organization and controls all male members of the universe which She has created. One cannot shave Jahweh's beard, dress Him in female garb, and worship the Goddess. She is not simply

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37Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 109.

38Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 109.

a transposed male divinity, but the entire conception of the Goddess, Śakti, Mother, is different:

> . . . The Śākta doctrine is concerned with those Spiritual Principles which exist before, and are the origin of, both men and women. Whether, in the appearance of the animal species, the female 'antedates' the male is a question with which it is not concerned. Nor does it say that the 'female principle' is the supreme Divinity. Śiva the 'male' is co-equal with Śivé, the 'female,' for both are one and the same. . . . Śakti is not a male nor a female 'person,' nor a male nor a female 'principle,' in the sense in which sociology, which is concerned with gross matter, uses those terms. Śakti is symbolically 'female' if it is the productive principle. Śiva in so far as He represents the Cit or Consciousness aspect, is actionless (Niṣkriya), though the two are inseparably associated even in creation. The Supreme is the attributeless (Nirguna) Śiva, or the neuter Brahman which is neither 'male' nor 'female.'[39]

Thus, it is clear that in Śākta doctrine the Divine is understood to be beyond all manifestation, sexless, or the union of the sexes, Śiva-Śakti, the full complete perfection before separation occurs; but the Divine is worshipped as Śakti, Energy, the Great Mother of all things, the positive elementary character of the feminine archetype.

Since everything in the universe is seen as a manifestation of the Mother, born from Her infinite womb, and She is in fullest reality Śiva-Śakti undivided, then the entire universe is strictly non-dualistic (Advaitavāda). There are not ultimately Two or Many, but One only without a Second ("Ekam eva advitiyam."), as expressed in the classical Upaniṣadic statement of this doctrine. She is the Great Round containing

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[39]Woodroffe, Śakti, pp. 110-11.

all phenomena. Thus, though it is recognized that the feminine symbol of Mother is not a restriction of the absolute Divine Reality, yet it is most powerful and effective, implying the powerful feminine role of giver of life, nourisher and sustainer of the elementary type and the role of Savioress of the transformative type.

> . . . The human, and indeed any, mother is sacred as the giver (under God) of Life, but it is the Divine Mother of All (Śrīmātā), the 'Treasure-House of Compassion,' who alone is both the Giver of life in the world and of its joys, and who (as Tāriṇī) is the Savioress from its miseries, and who again is, for all who unite with Her, the Life of all lives--that unalloyed bliss named Liberation. She is the Great Queen (Mahārājnā) of Heaven and of yet higher worlds, of Earth and of the Underworlds. To Her both Devas, Devīs, and men give worship. Her Feet are adored by even Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra.[40]

There is no difference really in Her function as Śakti and as Mother. Mother is simply a more devotional name, a name of the heart, while Śakti is more a name of the mind. Śakti's role of creating form is expressed in relation to the symbol of Mother as personalizing, one of the archetypal anima's functions.

> . . . In herself (Svarūpa) She is not a person in man's sense of the term, but She is ever and incessantly <u>personalizing</u>; assuming the multiple masks (Persona) which are the varied forms of mind-matter. As therefore manifest, She is all Personalities and as the collectivity thereof the Supreme Person (Parāhantā). But in Her own ground from which, clad in form, She emerges and personalizes, She is beyond all form, and therefore beyond

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[40]Woodroffe, <u>Śakti</u>, pp. 262-63.

> all personality known to us. She works in and as all things; now greatly veiling Her consciousness-bliss in gross matter, now by gradual stages more fully revealing Herself in the Forms of the one universal Life which She is.[41]

She is the bearer of the worlds and the personalizer, but it is particularly in Her aspect as the giver of enjoyment and liberation that She is worshipped by the Śākta. As She has given form to the universe, and is present in and through all these forms, She is the only one who can give enjoyment of these forms. In worship of Her one discovers not simply the Absolute Being nature of reality which gives freedom from suffering and decay, but one discovers the bliss, Ānanda, of Her presence in form.

> . . . It is She as Power who takes the active and changeful part in generation, as also in conceiving, bearing and giving birth to the World-Child. All this is the function of the divine, as it is of the human, mother. . . . It is thus to the Mother that man owes the World of Form or Universe. Without Her as material cause, Being cannot display itself. It is but a corpse (Śava). Both Śiva and Śakti give that supreme beyond-world Joy which is Liberation (Mukti, Paramānanda). They are each Supreme Consciousness and Bliss. The Mother is Ānandalaharī or Wave Bliss. To attain to that is to be liberated. But Śakti the Mother is alone the giver of World-Joy (Bhukti, Bhaumānanda), since it is She who becomes the Universe. As such She is the Wave of Beauty (Soundaryalaharī).[42]

It is through Her form as the world that She and Śiva are to be attained, not through renunciation which leads to the Real in its nonworld aspect. When the world is known as the Mother, liberation is attained. Evolution, then, is a gradual release

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[41] Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 192.

[42] Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 268.

from the veil of form which occurs as a result of devotion to the Divine Mother who is the complete whole reality, as well as the partial and relative reality. But liberation is not solely the result of any action of the sādhaka, it is a gift of the Mother's grace, for She alone can loosen the knot of Māyā which She has tied.

A final and significant part of the symbol of the Divine Mother is not quite as pleasant as Her nature as bearer of the worlds, personalizer, and giver of enjoyment and liberation. She is the destroyer or withdrawer of all those forms and beings to whom She has given birth, the negative elementary Death Mother. She combines within Her nature what on the relative plane is disguised as good and evil, positive and negative. This is most powerfully and dramatically expressed in a vision of Sri Ramakrishna, a devotee of the Mother in Her aspect as Kālī, the destroyer, the Black Goddess, who wears a necklace of skulls, a skirt of human arms and hands, whose mouth drips blood from Her long, lolling tongue, and who carries in Her four hands symbols of birth and death. She dances on the cremation ground of the inert body of her husband Śiva, symbolizing that all created, compound form must dissolve back into the formless, since all form is divine time (Kālā) and the Goddess Kālī is the personification of time, which constantly passes.

> . . . There arose in the Master's mind during this period, a desire to see the deluding power of the Mother of the universe when he saw that a female figure of extraordinary beauty rose from

> the waters of the Ganga and came with a dignified gait to the Panchavati. Presently he saw that the said figure was in an advanced stage of pregnancy; a few minutes later he saw that she gave birth to a beautiful baby in his very presence and suckled the baby very affectionately; the next moment he saw that the same figure assumed a very cruel and frightful appearance and, taking the baby into her mouth, masticated it and swallowed it! She then entered the waters of the river whence she had appeared.[43]

It is this conjunction of good and evil, the nourishing, positive elementary Mother and the devouring, negative elementary Mother, which is so difficult to grasp for those brought up on the dualistic Christian view of the Divine, which separates God from the Devil, separates Mary from Eve, and rarely raises the question of how the Serpent found its way into the Garden of Eden. But in the Tantric view this conjunction is expressed in the very bodily image of the Mother Herself.

> . . . Her, who being the sole Creatrix, Preserver and Destructress of infinite millions of worlds, has on Her Body the mark of the Yoni signifying creation, full and high breasts denoting preservation, and a terrible visage signifying the withdrawal of all things.[44]

Here the Mother is not a human person, but a comprehensive reality to be understood meditatively, hence She represents the creative and destructive aspects in togetherness to indicate her self-sufficiency or complete character in contrasting possibilities, not as an entity of a restricted sort.

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[43] Swami Saradānanda, Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master, trans. Swami Jagadānanda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1952), pp. 201-2.

[44] Woodroffe, Hymns, p. 279.

In the image of Kālī the inevitable decay, death, and dissolution (perishing aspect) of phenomenal reality is clearly stated, for all existence occurs in pairs of opposites, i.e., pleasure and pain, light and dark, birth and death. In worship of Kālī, all forms of experience, regardless of the preference of the experiencing ego, must be accepted and embraced, as She wields the sword of renunciation which cuts the bonds of attachment which lead to suffering.

> . . . the creative and world-sustaining Mother, as seen in Śākta worship (Hādimata), is a Joyous Figure crowned with ruddy flashing gems, clad in red raiment . . . more effulgent than millions of red rising suns, with one hand granting all blessings (Varamudrā), and with the other dispelling all fears (abhaya-mudra). It is true that She seems fearful to the uninitiate in her form as Kālī, but the worshippers of this form (Kādimata) know Her as the Wielder of the Sword of Knowledge which, severing man from ignorance--that is, partial knowledge--gives him Perfect Experience. To such worshippers the burning ground--with its corpses, its apparitions, and haunting malignant spirits--is no terror. These forms, too, are Hers.[45]

This acceptance is not simply an intellectual acquiescence, but a heartfelt and complete surrender, as it is said, "What care I for the Father if I but be on the lap of the Mother?"[46]

Teachings of the Śākta Tantras

Having examined the symbols of Devī in the Śākta Tantras, there are several aspects of the practical teachings of the Tantras which stem from worship of the Goddess and express Her

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[45]Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 277.

[46]Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 269.

transformative wisdom. The Śākta Tantras are essentially non-sectarian, emphasizing adaptability of form and secrecy. The limits of sectarianism and the exalting of one form above another are considered to be bonds which derive from ignorance as to the true source of all form, i.e., Śakti. Thus it is said:

> . . . at heart a Śākta, outwardly a Śaiva, in gatherings a Vaiṣṇava (who are wont to gather together for worship in praise of Hari) in thus many a guise the Kaulas wander on earth.[47]

Adaptability, tolerance, and perception of the entire world as the glory of the Divine Mother characterize the Śākta's outlook. And, as shall be seen, this extends not only to tolerance of others' religious views and organizations, but of all aspects of experience and consciousness, even those judged evil, illusory, sensual, and entrapping. The Śākta strives to see all form, i.e., greed and sexual desire as well as compassion and renunciation, with an equal eye, as essentially an expression of Divine Consciousness, no matter how veiled.

> . . . It is indifferent what the Kaula's apparent sect may be. The form is nothing and everything. It is nothing in the sense that it has no power to narrow the Kaula's inner life. It is everything in the sense that knowledge may infuse its apparent limitations with a universal meaning. A man may thus live in all sects, without their form being ever to him a bond.[48]

The second characteristic, which is in a sense a corollary of the teaching of adaptability, since all form issues

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[47]Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 102. A Kaula is a worshipper of Śakti.

[48]Woodroffe, Śakti, pp. 102-3.

from the Mother, is the Śākta's acceptance of all spiritual aspirants, regardless of the traditional discriminations of caste and sex. It must be remembered that, although there are a few women mentioned in the Vedas and Upaniṣads, i.e., Maitreyī, the wife of Yajñavalkya, all women were excluded from participation in rituals during the Vedic period. Later, during the Epic period of the Rāmāyaṇa, Rāma performed a yajna rite with a gold statue of his wife Sītā as a requisite item. But to the Śākta who does not distinguish simply on the basis of external gross material form, i.e., a male or female body, such restrictions are irrelevant. Discrimination is made according to the teaching of adhikāri, one's capacity for following a particular path, and all beings are considered qualified to follow some spiritual path, since all are in essence Consciousness. Sexual discrimination is not simply irrelevant, to the Śākta it is wrong. For the Śākta does not simply tolerate women, but honors them as direct manifestations of the Divine Mother Herself.

> . . . It is because Woman is a Vigraha of the Ambā Devī, Her likeness in flesh and blood, that the Śākta Tantras enjoin the honour and worship of women and girls (Kumārīs), and forbid all harm to them such as the Satī rite, enjoining that not even a female animal is to be sacrificed.[49]

The female of every species is honored, the female is not harmed, and may never be killed and eaten, for the principle of Motherhood resides in each of them. It is only here

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[49] Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 109.

that women are allowed to be Gurus. For it is said that initiation by a Mother is most auspicious, bearing eightfold fruit. More specifically, cross-sexual initiation is valued, that is, male initiation by a female guru and female initiation by a male guru.[50] Since each person carries within them in their body and consciousness both male and female aspects, i.e., idā and piṅgalā, active and receptive aspects, the Jungian animus and anima, the aspect which is recessive, i.e., for a male his female aspect, can be brought to consciousness through initiation by one representing that aspect, i.e., a female guru.

> . . . it is said in the Tantra, 'Wherever one sees the feet of woman, one should give worship in one's soul even as to one's guru.' Thus, this thought of the Shakta side of Hinduism becomes an uncompromising declaration of the divinity of woman completing the Vedantic declaration of the concealed divinity in man which we are too apt to treat in practice as if it applied only in the masculine. We put away in silence, even when we do not actually deny it, the perfect equality in difference of the double manifestation.[51]

The point Sri Aurobindo makes here is well taken. The Vedantic declaration of "that art thou" refers to every being, not simply to men, and, more particularly, not simply to forest dwellers, mendicants, and sannyasin priests. But it seems that when patriarchal divinities rule the heavens, and the Vedas present a heavy predominance of male gods, human males

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[50] Woodroffe, _Śakti_, p. 109.

[51] Sri Aurobindo, cited in Shankaranarayanan, _Glory of the Divine Mother_ (Pondicherry: Dipti Publications, 1968), p. 55.

rule the earth, and women are subordinated to their "superior" hierarchical power. In the Śākta Tantras, though, which worship the Great Goddess, Devī, in Her manifold forms, the divinity of women is revealed and respected. This is not at the expense of men and they are not subordinated, for the Mother rules with love not power, and all beings are equal within Her compassionate love. There seems to be a correlation between the recognition of the femininity of the Divine, the Goddess, and the recognition of the divinity of the feminine, woman.

The third characteristic of Śākta doctrine is its emphasis on practical means of self-realization in the here and now, i.e., sādhanā.

> . . . Apart from its great doctrine of Śakti, the main significance of the Śākta Tantra Śāstra lies in this, that it affirms the principle of the necessity of Sādhanā and claims to afford a means available to all of whatever caste and of either sex whereby the teachings of Vedanta may be practically realized.[52]

The viewpoint taken is not from the standpoint of ultimate or transcendent reality in which what is "real" is defined as absolutely unchanging through all time as Śaṁkara does. The world, which in our ordinary experience is assumed to be real, is accepted, and practical techniques are taught so that higher, less veiled, states of consciousness can be experienced in the here and now. The emphasis is on practical sādhanā. Since each of us is composed of nothing but Śakti, the problem

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[52]Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 113.

is how to awaken, vivify, and raise this Śakti, and this is the work of one's sādhanā. This sādhanā, or work on oneself, need not be done in a monastery or only after renunciation of this worldly life. This is not an ascetic stance which actually denies that "All is One."

> . . . It is not necessary, however, to renounce when all is seen to be Her. And, when all is so seen, then the spiritual illumination which transfuses all thoughts and acts makes them noble and pure.[53]

In fact, this path may be the opposite of the negative ascetic path of restraint and denial, the "neti, neti," "not this, not this" of the Upaniṣads. It is a positive path of fully experiencing, to the depths, each moment of life, moment by moment, recognizing it all as parts of the Divine Glory, "iti, iti," "this and this."[54] In mundane consciousness the depths of life are missed; by being ignorant of our essential nature as Śakti we float on the surface of life. The emphasis is on the total experience of life in one's own sādhanā. The truth seen in Tantra is that the entire universe is a joyful efflorescence of the dynamics of the Supreme Śiva-Śakti in their creative movement. The aim of sādhanā is to make each person a center of this ebullient Bliss (Ānanda) of the Divine Play (Līlā).

This total experience of life is not merely a glorified

53Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 214.

54"The Tantra discards nothing, rejects nothing: it uses everything for the Divine Purpose as all this is Śakti." Shankaranarayanan, p. 25.

hedonism, but exemplifies the monistic intuition of the one source of all phenomena. It is a basic principle of this sādhanā, then, that one does not rise by means of an ascetic rejection of Nature, but through and by means of Her. The Tantras are the yoga of the Kali Yuga, in which people are said to be so deeply veiled in flesh and sensuality that they cannot turn away from and renounce it. All Hindu schools seek suppression of mere animal (paśu) worldly desire, but a different means of transformation of desire is taught here. It is the feminine transformative mode. It is said in the Bengali Kulārṇava Tantra, first published in 1878, that one must rise by that through which one falls, as a thorn is used to pick out a thorn: "As one falls on the ground, one must lift oneself by aid of the ground.[55] Those very things, acts, feelings which bind one in greater bonds of ignorance must become the means of liberation. As long as certain desires are avoided within oneself and yet are still experienced in the continuum of awareness, they will be projected onto other people and situations. Repression rarely succeeds in annihilating desire, it simply blinds one to the presence of desire in oneself, and creates antipathy toward the presence of desire in others. Having long ago understood what modern Western psychology calls the theory of projection, Tantra does not teach ascetic denial of desire, but satisfaction of desire with

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[55]Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 403. See M. P. Pandit, Kulārṇava Tantra (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1973).

conscious awareness. Conscious satisfaction of desire reveals that in the depth of every need, every desire, every experience, is the voice of the Divine Mother, calling Her children home again to the perfect satisfaction, bliss, ānanda, which She is.

> . . . The common aim of all the Tantric practices, it is inferred, is to accustom the aspirant, through self-control and repeated efforts and perseverance, to the conviction that those very objects--sights, tastes, etc., which tempt human beings, make them experience repeated birth and death, and prevent them from attaining self-knowledge by realizing God--are none other than the veritable forms of God.[56]

By honoring a desire, through bringing consciousness into it, mere animal functions are converted into acts of worship, and both liberation and enjoyment are attained. Through facing that which one would avoid and suppress, unconsciousness is brought into the light, the range of consciousness increased, and evolution is furthered. This is the rationale behind the much berated Pañcatattva secret ritual, which uses the forbidden and "sinful" acts of meat-eating, wine-drinking, and sexual intercourse in its worship of Śakti.

> . . . those who worship Śakti, worship Divinity as creatrix and in the form of the universe. If She appears as and in natural function, She must be worshipped therewith, otherwise, as the Tantra (Mahānirvāṇa) cited says, worship is fruitless. The Mother of the Universe must be worshipped with these five elements, namely: wine, meat, fish, grain, and woman, or their substitutes. By their use the universe (Jagad-brahmānda) itself is used as the article of worship.[57]

In this way, those things which are thought to be opposites,

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[56] Saradānanda, p. 193. [57] Woodroffe, _Śakti_, p. 394.

i.e., the universe and the Divine, are seen to be in reality one.

A second point concerning the process of tantric sādhanā is alluded to here, and may be called the conjunction of opposites, like the <u>coincidentia oppositorum</u> of medieval Christian theology. The left-handed path (vāmāchāra) is based on the notion of the "return current" of energy or nivṛitti, which reverses the process which creates and maintains the bonds which hold the embodied soul, (jīva) at an unconscious level. Through the self-limiting power (māyā) of Śakti, energy polarizes itself into "aham" and "idam," subject and object, the idā and piṅgalā of Kuṇḍalinī yoga, left and right, the moon and sun, prajña (wisdom) and upāya (compassion), prāṇa and apāna, and all other pairs of opposites of which this universe is composed. All of a sādhaka's efforts are to unite these pairs, that is, to follow the Middle Way, which in Kuṇḍalinī yoga is the suṣumṇā. There are, then, two stages of tantric sādhanā: the cosmicization of the human being, attained through the practice of mandala meditation, mantra, yantra, nyāsa, and pañchatattva, in which the human person is seen to contain the magical forces or divinities of the cosmos; and the transcendence of the cosmos, that is, its destruction through the unification of opposites.

> . . . Tantrism multiplies the pairs of opposites (sun and moon, Śiva and Śakti, idā and piṅgalā, etc.) and . . . attempts to 'unify' them through techniques combining subtle physiology with meditation. This fact must be emphasized: on whatever plane it is realized, the conjunction of opposites represents a transcending

> of the phenomenal world, abolishment of all experience of duality.[58]

The emphasis in Tantra, then, is that all contraries are illusory, that extreme good coincides with extreme evil when seen with an "equal eye"; and the purpose of sādhanā is reunion of the two polar principles within the disciple's own body and consciousness. The images which are used suggest a return to a primordial state of nondifferentiation, to the original Unity. This is a regressive process, a kind of cosmic reabsorption, going against the current, an inversion of psychophysiological process which causes a destruction of the cosmos and of time and thus an entrance into immortality. The outgoing current of energy, haṁsah, produces differentiation, diversification, polarity, and separation, the masculine. The return current of energy, so'ham, produces assimilation, integration, and identification, the feminine. The disciple undertakes the process of reabsorption, the return current, anticipating the process which occurs at death, and shattering the plane of diversity.

> . . . It is the coincidence of time and eternity, bhāva and nirvāṇa; on the purely 'human' plane, it is the reintegration of the primordial androgyne, the conjunction, in one's own being, of male and female--in a word, the reconquest of the completeness that precedes all creation.[59]

This is the union of anima and animus in the fully individuated being.

Emphasis on the actual manifestation of the union of

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[58] Eliade, p. 269. [59] Eliade, p. 271.

opposites in one's own body, transforming the body, makes clear a third characteristic of tantric sādhanā: its acceptance of the body, flesh, and the world. Since man is in body, mind and spirit a manifestation of Śakti, then all is divine. To say that matter or anything in its natural functioning is low or evil, is to denigrate Śakti. To the hero (vīra) anything done with an "equal eye," that is, with the right intention, may be an act of worship. This is directly contrary to the Christian denigration of the body and the world, and may be an essential difference between the Father's world and the Mother's world.

> . . . The Tantra Śāstra propounds a many-sided science of discipline for the dissolution of this veil and realisation of the true character of oneself and the universe as concrete manifestations of the One Divine Reality. The way they teach to attain to this reality of the Self is through an integral embrace of the body of this Reality, the Universe, and not by fleeing from the touch of its Body.[60]

Tantrism talks of a divine body, implying that true sanctity must be found in transforming one's own actual material being. Matter cannot simply be transcended, which usually means ignored.

> . . . In the tantric conception, the cosmos appears as a vast fabric of magical forces; and the same forces can be awakened or organized in the human body, through the techniques of mystical physiology.[61]

The mystical law of the identity of the microcosm and macrocosm, i.e., the human body and the cosmos, can be seen in

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[60] Pandit, p. 53. [61] Eliade, p. 216.

the practice of nyāsa. Nyāsa is the ritual projection of divinities into various parts of the body. This is done through the use of mantra in conjunction with touching particular parts of the body, thus awakening the divinity within the flesh itself. This transformation of the physical is the goal of tantric sādhanā, this "transubstantiation of every 'concrete' experience."[62] Thus, the Upaniṣadic and post-Upaniṣadic pessimism and asceticism which Campbell calls the Great Reversal, were swept away in Tantra, where the body is seen not as a source of pain, but as the most reliable and effective instrument at man's disposal for conquering death and attaining enjoyment (bhukti) and liberation (mukti).

In the practice of maithuna, ritual sexual union, all three of these themes, i.e., experiencing those instinctual acts which bind one to the world as conscious acts, the conjunction of opposites, and affirmation of the body, combine in a profound exaltation of experience. In the Pañchatattva ritual of the vāmāchāra path of the Śākta sect of Tantra,[63] one of the five elements of the worship is ritual sexual union. Sexual union here is not for the purpose of satisfying emotional or instinctual needs, or for hedonistic purposes, but it is a ritual in which the human couple become the divine couple and a psychphysiological activity is transmuted into a sacrament. This kind of transmutation is characteristic of

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[62]Eliade, p. 252.

[63]Woodroffe, The Pañchatattva, pp. 373-412.

every archaic spirituality. Decadence begins with the loss of the symbolic meaning of bodily activities.

In pre-Tantric India sexual union was performed ritually as an orgiastic act for the purpose of procuring universal fecundity or of creating a kind of magical defense; and it was performed as a hierogamy, or revelation of the divine, as can be seen in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad VI, 4, 20: "I am the heaven; thou, the earth,' says the husband to the wife." Tantric sexual union follows the second pattern, not staying on the surface of sensual sexuality but penetrating to the deepest levels of sexual/spiritual interchange.

> . . . The marriage of the Divine couple, Kāmeśvara and Kāmeśvarī--that is, Being and Power to Become--is the archetype of all generative embraces.[64]

In one of the first stages of maithuna the yogi, male, contemplates the ritual nudity of the yoginī, female, as a revelation of sacred mystery. It is interesting to remember the nude Paleolithic Goddess figurines which suggested that the female form in itself was seen as a divine revelation in its very being, without any activity or function, i.e., clothing. (Medieval witches also performed certain rituals without clothing.) After contemplation, there is a transformation of the woman, seen as a manifestation of matter, earth, prakṛti, into an incarnation of Śakti, Divine Energy, and of the yogi into a god. Thus the union is a divine union, manifested through the material forms of the two devotees, which are,

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[64]Woodroffe, Śakti, p. 271.

through this act, transformed into divine beings:

> . . . Prepared for the performance of the rite (maithuna) by the meditation and the ceremonies that make it possible and fruitful, he (i.e., the yogin) considers the yoginī, his companion and mistress, under the name of some Bhagavatī, as the substitute and the very essence of Tārā, sole source of joy and rest. The mistress synthesizes the entire nature of woman, she is mother, sister, wife, daughter; in her voice, demanding love, the officiant recognizes the voices of the Bhagavatīs supplicating Vajradhara, Vajrasattva. Such, for both the Śaiva and Bauddha tantric schools, is the way of salvation, of bodhi.[65]

The symbols used in Vishṇaite Tantra sects are Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

> Rādhā is conceived as the infinite love that constitutes the very essence of Kṛṣṇa. Woman participates in the nature of Rādhā and man in the nature of Kṛṣṇa.[66]

The meeting between them occurs in Vrindaban, a town in India, but in the Mahābhārata it is a mythical place, symbolizing the true nature of the union as between the essential, archetypal man and the extraordinary woman. Their union, then, is one of play, pure spontaneity, a dance of love which transforms all one's outer activities. Through this method of purification, through mantra and mudra, identification and sublimation, the mundane consciousness of the participants is elevated into a cosmic principle and a reaffirmation of divine identity is made.

Maithuna does not refer, however, only to sexual

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[65]La Vallee Poussin, Bouddhisme: Etudes et Materiaux, p. 135. Cited by Eliade, p. [illegible].

[66]Eliade, p. 265.

union, but in its broader sense means, "action, reaction, coupling," or the coming together of all pairs of opposites, e.g., when mantra is said there is maithuna of the lips. Since everything in experience is in polarity, maithuna symbolizes the unity beyond duality which is attained through the conscious "play" or spontaneous activity of all polarities. By offering this sexual element (tattva) to the Divine, one is offering up the sense of duality so that the underlying oneness may be realized. Thus sexual union symbolizes the coincidentia oppositorum in an ultimate and very earthly sense. And it is this conjunction of opposites which "constitutes the metaphysical constant of all tantric rituals and meditations"[67] and which is characteristic of the archetypal feminine.

Having examined certain characteristics of the Śākta teachings, i.e., its nonsectarianism, acceptance and honoring of women, and sādhanā, a clearer understanding of the import and significance of Tantric doctrine is possible. Many of these characteristics, as well as the specific themes of Tantric sādhanā, i.e., its pragmatic emphasis on experience in the here and now, the positive path of the exaltation and acceptance of all life experience as the manifold forms of the Mother, the conjunction of opposites, acceptance of the body, and maithuna, propose a type of spirituality quite different than the ascetic, world-denying practices of patriarchal

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[67]Eliade, p. 258.

religion. Acceptance of the world, of feeling, the body, sexuality, and women are intimately connected with the image of the Divine as Mother and as Śakti, primordial Energy and Power. When all the universe is seen as the Mother who brings form out of the formless absolute (Śiva), then the proper attitude toward form is reverence, worship, and glorification.

Each experience, whether pleasurable or painful, is joyously accepted as a gift of the Divine Mother. Being in the world and working through the world, the world becomes the seat of liberation. But when the universe is seen as a creation of the creator Father God, who is always and ultimately separated from His creation, as a male is always and ultimately separated from the fetus which his sperm aided in creating but which is now growing in the mother's womb alone, then any experience simply involves one more and more in that which is separate from the Divine. Therefore, the proper path must be disengagement and detachment from phenomenal experience, even the judgment of such experience as evil and deluding, in search of the absolute, noumenal Being of the Father. The Śākta Tantras present not only a clear expression of the symbol of the Divine as Mother, but a view of the world and a spiritual path which is in accordance with that symbolic image.

It may finally be noted that the Tantric view represents an advancement beyond the early Indian cultural processes of Hinduism and Buddhism in which females were wrongly identified as objects of transient pleasure, as later was maintained in Christianity. In the Tantra there was a new consciousness

of both male and female principles, not in their empirical representations, but in their transempirical archetypal base. They were seen as equally important poles of existence, co-existing with and supplementing the other. This led Tantra toward a transcendent union beyond the phenomenal extremities, which is cultivated in a meditative context.

Chapter 6

DEVĪ MĀHĀTMYAM

> Thus that adorable goddess, although ever-lasting, yet taking birth again and again, accomplishes the safeguarding of the world, O king. By her this universe is bewitched; she verily gives birth to the universe. And when besought, she bestows knowledge; when gratified, she bestows prosperity. All this egg of Brahmā, O king, is pervaded by her, who is Mahākālī at Mahākāla and who has the nature of the Great Destroying Goddess. She indeed is Mahā-mārī at the fated time; she indeed is creation, the Unborn; She indeed the Eternal gives stability to created beings at their fated time. She indeed is Lakshmī, bestowing prosperity on the houses of men while She abides with them; and she indeed when she is absent becomes the goddess of Ill-fortune unto their destruction.[1]

The Devī Māhātmyam or Glorification of the Great Goddess is a Tantric scriptural classic which has been highly revered throughout India for centuries and even today is a significant part of worship of the Goddess. It is said to be as important devotionally in Hinduism as the Bhagavad-Gita is metaphysically. Though the actual eleven chapters of the Devī Māhātmyam, popularly known as the Caṇḍi, seem to have been written in the fourth century A. D., the concepts and practices which it expresses stem from very early times.

Earliest evidence for worship of the Goddess is found in the pre-Āryan civilizations of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa of

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[1]F. Eden Pargiter, trans., Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa (Delhi: Indological Book House, 1969), pp. 521-22, Canto XCII, vs. 33-7.

the third millennium, which have been discussed in the previous chapter. In order to provide the proper context for the symbols and concepts of the Great Mother in the Śandi, which will be examined here, a brief examination of the Vedic concept of the Mother must be made. Secondly, some critical examination of the historical origin of the Śandi and its position in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa will be necessary. Thirdly, a brief synopsis and analysis of the mythological story told in the Śandi, with some comments on its symbolism will occur. Finally, on the basis of these preliminary investigations, analysis of the concept and symbology of the Goddess can be made, and some conclusions drawn as to the nature of the archetypal feminine imagery embodied in the great figure of Devī.

Vedic Concepts of Devī

> The Goddess represents the metaphysical principle of Power (Śakti), the transcendent source and support of all creatures and creation as propounded both in the Vedas and in the Purāṇas.[2]

In the view of the ancient Rishis who composed the Vedas, approximately 1500-900 B. C., creation occurs on two levels, on the level of mind and the level of matter. On the material level, the creation occurs through a mother and a father. On the mental level, an analogy is made, and the two parents are symbolized as Svayambhū and Virāj, as Mahādeva and

[2] Vasudeva S. Agrawala, The Glorification of the Great Goddess (Varanasi, India: All India Kashiraj Trust, 1963), p. 2.

Mahī Mātā.

> . . . In the Indian religious tradition from the very beginning the divine reality is conceived of as both Man and Woman. The divine essence is both Father and Mother, namely, the two Universal Parents who vitalise each other and become progenitors of all living beings and the universe. Like the two oscillating poles of a single charge both the Great God and the Great Goddess--Mahādeva and Mahādevī--represent the two aspects of a single cosmic reality who is supreme and transcendent in its absolute form but is immanent at all levels in manifestation.[3]

Mahādeva, Great God, is like the center of a circle, and Mahī Mātā, Great Mother, is like the circumference. The circle attains to its greatness through the circumference, but it is always in relationship to the center. The circumference is the Mahat, Universal.

This conception of two principles at the root of creation, symbolized as male and female in character, pervades all of Indian thought, from its Vedic beginnings until and including modern times. It is said that the One becomes Two for the sake of Creation, but these Two are not ultimate, for they return at the appropriate time to the One who is One without a Second. One half of these Two is described as Svayambhū (self-existent reality), Vrishā (male), Pitā (father), and Dyauḥ (heaven). The other half is described as Parameshṭhī (supremely established or energetically existent), Virāj (the Cosmic Cow whose teats ooze with ambrosial milk for all creation), Mātā (mother), and Pṛithivī (earth). Svayambhū is related to

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[3]Agrawala, p. i.

the sattvic guṇa, that is, to light and stasis. There is no movement here. It is the center of the circle. Parameṣṭhī is related to the rajasic guṇa, which represents movement, energy, the mixture of light and dark. No creation is possible without motion, so it is only when Parameshṭhī, the feminine, is present that creation can occur.

> . . . According to the Vedic conception the Universal is spoken of as Virāj, the same as Mahat, which the Gītā speaks of as the Yoni, the great Womb of the Mother in which she receives the seed of creation from the opposite principle.[4]

It is clear that the female principle is essential, then, to Vedic thought, because creation not only originates from Her, but She permeates every manifest thing as its very substance. She is known as the Power (Śakti) which moves all things. Her general name is Ambikā, the Mother, but She is also named Deva-māta, Mother of the Gods, and is identified as Aditī, universal Nature or Infinity.

In addition to various references to Devī, the Goddess, in the Vedas, there are two Sūktas which are devoted to Her. The first is the Vāgāmbhriṇī Sūkta, Ṛig Veda 10.125. 1-8, and the poetess who speaks is Vāk, the daughter of the Rishi Āmbhṛiṇī. These names are a bit confusing, however, for the poetess has merged her own self, known by the particular name of Āmbhṛiṇī, with that aspect of Devī known as Vāk, the Universal Power as Speech, or Śabda, Sound. The name Āmbhṛiṇī, too, is symbolic, for she is described as the daughter of the

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[4]Agrawala, p. 4. See Bhagavad-Gītā, 14,3.

primeval ocean, but:

> . . . Āmbhriṇī is the same as the Ocean, the cosmic Samudra called Ṛita, Parameshṭhī or the primeval source of the undifferentiated cosmos.[5]

It is this Ocean which is also known as Soma, the great infinite ocean of primeval creative energy, the "surging billowing sea of honey" of which this cosmos is but a single wave. This image of the Ocean occurs again and again, not only in the Indian tradition, but as an archetypal feminine motif. The Ocean is the great Womb of the Mother which is the source of all phenomena and in which all polarities are contained. The poetess Vāk says in verse 2, "I cherish and sustain high-swelling Soma." This reveals that She is the support and controller of the overflowing ocean of Soma. She is the foundation of the oceans which bear all the possibilities of existence from the beginning of time to the end of it. "The Goddess herself is that Soma and each Mother is an example of the Soma principle."[6]

This leads to the understanding that the paradoxical truth of her nature is the combination of polarities, of rest and motion, of devas (gods) and asuras (demons), that is, of good and evil, light and dark--which all abide in her without contradiction.

> . . . the whole spirit behind the Daivāsuram motif of the Devī-Māhātmya is practically a restatement of the ancient Indian religious and cosmogonic tradition.[7]

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[5]Agrawala, p. 223 [6]Agrawala, p. 226.

[7]Agrawala, p. 227.

As phenomena are born from Her womb, differentiation occurs and polarities separate. Then Devī creates various destructive deities out of herself, e.g., Rudra, Chaṇḍikā, Durgā, who destroy the powers of good and light.

In verse 3, Vāk says, "I am the Queen, the gatherer up of treasures." As Queen, She has a temporal and an intrinsic aspect to Her power. The temporal (kshatra) aspect of Her power relating to matter is that She keeps together the eight Vasus who represent the basic principles of manifestation, i.e., Mind, Life (breathing in and breathing out), and the five elements of matter. In the Vedic view, the several sheaths of the human body are woven from these eight threads on a loom by the Mother.

The intrinsic aspect of Her power refers to Her nature as Vāk, the Word or Logos, which is symbolized as Buddhi and as Sarasvatī. She is the mother of the god of all knowledge, Brahmā, for all knowledge comes through the Word, and She creates the minds which become illumined. Vāk, or as She is known in Tamil, Cintā Devī, also has two aspects: Amṛita Vāk and Martyā Vāk. As Amṛita Vāk, She belongs to the devas and is present as consciousness of the world of continuity giving the joys of immortality. As Martyā Vāk, She belongs to men and is present as consciousness of the world of discontinuity, giving the sorrows of death. It is in Her nature as Amṛita Vāk, or the thousand-syllabled speech, that She has custody of the supreme secret of creation. In verse 5, She says, "I, verily, myself announce and utter the word that gods and men

alike shall welcome." So it is that people can listen to either Word of Devī, for She gives both words of joy and of sorrow. She is indeed the Great Goddess, the "Devī who is beyond this earth and beyond that heaven" (Vs. 8), the Goddess whose two eyes are creation and withdrawal, contraction and expansion of prāṇa, life energy. She is the universal Virāj, Mother Cow who lows or manifests Herself as the Word and measures out the worlds.

The second Sūkta devoted to Devī is the Dākshāyanī or Rātri Sūkta (Ṛig Veda 10.72). Here the Goddess is shown as Rātri Devī, the Night. She is the sister of Uṣas, the Goddess of Dawn; She is the Dark Mother, the mother of creation, mother of the primeval ocean which is Her infinite womb. She is said to possess many eyes and to be looking forth from many spots, which means that each creation sprouting forth from her is actually a conscious eye which looks upon the world. These eyes then embroider her darkness until She becomes visible as Uṣas, the Dawn. Sri Aurobindo interprets Uṣas as the awakening of the Divine in man, since She is the precursor of the Sun which symbolizes supreme Truth. It is the awakening from the Night of unconsciousness, from Rātri.

> Rātri as the creative mother exposes herself every day in the form of the conscious world, but her darkness is the true reality, in the form of the subconscious and the unconscious into which the whole world of men, animals and birds must re-enter.[3]

She is darkness, the unconscious, from which everything emerges

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[3]Agrawala, pp. 237-8.

and to which it returns, the Great Round. Kāla, or Time, in Sanskrit, also means darkness, and Rātri is also Kālī, the Black Goddess. She is the dark mother who bears light in her womb, and is waiting to give birth to it. As She appears in the conscious world, She is the veil or envelopment of consciousness, the limiting or covering factor which renders all things finite. She is māyā, "the Great Night and the Great Illusion."[9]

The symbols discussed here, i.e., the Ocean, Soma, the union of polarities, Vāk, divine Word, Night, and the Unconscious, each appear again in the picture of Devī drawn in the Caṇḍī. Indeed, as Dr. V. S. Agrawala says:

> The Devī Māhātmya is an elaboration of the conception of the Devī of the Vedic doctrine of an all-powerful Goddess, of supreme transcendence, as propounded in the Ambhriṇī Sūkta (R.V. 10. 125) and Dākshāyaṇī Sūkta (R.V. 10. 72).[10]

Historical Background of the Devī-Māhātmyam

The Devī-Māhātmyam is an independent treatise which has been interpolated into the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, chapters 81-93. The Purāṇas are one of four categories of Indian orthodox sacred books (Śāstras). The word Purāṇa means "ancient lore," or that which lives from the old or that which is always new although it is old. Perhaps the most popular Purāṇas are the epic Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana. It is interesting to note that the highly significant Bhagavad-Gita, as the Devī Māhātmyam, is an interpolation in a Purāṇic text also, in this case the

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[9] Pargiter, ch. 11, vs. 23. [10] Agrawala, p. 155.

Mahābhārata.

The Mārkandeya Purana, including the Devī Māhātmyam, seems to have originated from western India, from the middle portion of the Narbada and Tapti valleys. The earliest copy was found in old Newari characters in the Royal Library in Nepal, dated 998 A.D., by Mahāmahopādhyāya Haraprasād Śāstrī.[11] The Purāṇa is made up of five separate sections which seem to have originated at different times and been compiled. These are divided by Dr. F. Eden Pargiter as follows: chapters 1-9, chapters 10-44, chapters 45-80, chapters 81-93 (the Candi), and chapters 94-136.

> . . . The Devī-Māhātmyam, the latest part, was certainly complete in the ninth century and very probably in the fifth or sixth century A.D. The third and fifth parts, which constituted the original Purāṇa, were very probably in existence in the third century and perhaps even earlier; and the first and second parts were composed between those two periods.[12]

Pargiter concludes, however, that the Devī-Māhātmyam was completed at a slightly earlier date, by about 400 A. D. Agrawala agrees with this date, citing a sloka from the Candi which is quoted on an inscription from western India, dated 608 A. D.:

> . . . this Purana was a product of the Gupta Age and . . . its redaction had been finalised by the time of Chandragupta Vikramāditya at the end of the fourth century A. D.[13]

Agrawala goes on to examine the themes and symbols of the Candi, and points out that, while it is rooted in Śakti worship, it is also filled with the broad eclectic spirit of tolerance

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[11] Pargiter, p. xiii. [12] Pargiter, p. xx.

[13] Agrawala, p. iv.

and understanding which characterize the Bhāgavata movement of the Gupta period.

> . . . It should be clearly understood that the conception of the Mahā-devī, of the Seven Mothers and of the demon Mahisha is rooted in the Vedic tradition, and in the Devī-Māhātmya we are face to face with a fine attempt to present the ancient material in a new formulation which was appropriate to the inspiration of the Bhāgavata movement as accepted by the Purāṇas and Tantras during the renaissance period of the Gupta Age.[14]

There were five principal religious movements during the Gupta period: 1. the Trayī or Veda, i.e., Upaniṣad, Āraṇyaka, Vedānta tradition; 2. Sāṁkhya, i.e., the conception of Śakti as three guṇas, as well as in Her transcendent form; 3. Yoga, which shares the Sāṁkhyan philosophy; 4. Pāśupata Śaivism; and 5. Pañcharātra Bhāgavatas.

> . . . As one reads the Devī-Māhātmya with an open eye the impression is created again and again that it is the quintessence of all the five above-mentioned doctrines both in their theoretical and practical form as they prevailed during the Gupta period.[15]

For example, Ekāntin Bhāgavatas were devoted to the worship of Nārāyaṇa whose śakti is Nārāyaṇī. Devī in the *Caṇḍī* is said to be Vishṇu (Nārāyaṇa)-Māyā, and in the hymn in chapter 5, almost every verse is addressed to Nārāyaṇī. Secondly, Devī is invoked as Trayī Devī, "the supreme Vidyā (knowledge) which is the cause of liberation."[16] She is said to be the repository of the "very pure Ṛk and Yajus hymns, and of Sāmans . . . You

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[14] Agrawala, pp. ii-iii. [15] Agrawala, p. vi.

[16] Swami Jagadīśvarānanda, trans., *Devī-Māhātmyam or Śrī Durgā-Saptaśatī* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1972), ch. 4, vs. 9.

are Bhagavatī embodying the three Vedas."[17] Thirdly, Devī represents the Sāṁkhyan tradition when She is hailed in this way.

> You are the origin of all the worlds: Though you are possessed of the three gunas you are not known to have any of their attendant defects like passion. . . You are verily the Supreme primordial Prakṛti untransformed.[18]

Fourthly, in Bhāgavatan ideology there is belief in the possibility of attaining both Bhukti (enjoyment) and Mukti (liberation). Devī grants both of these to Her devotees, granting Bhukti to Suratha and Mukti to Samadhi.

There are also various iconographical details which can help to fix the dating of the Ćandi, for these images can be found in Indian art work which can be dated. For example, the image of the Buffalo-demon Mahishāsura, emerging from the cut throat of the buffalo in a half-human form, only occurs after the fourth century A. D. Previous to this, during the Kushāṇa period, the art shows Mahishāsura only as a buffalo being trampled by Devī. Also, in the iconography of the Seven Mothers, Sapta-Mātṛikās, during the Kushāṇa period, they are shown simply as human figures with the right hand raised in the abhaya-mudrā of fearlessness, but with no distinguishing symbols or vehicles. It is only in the later Gupta period that symbols and vehicles appear, and they are precisely the ones described in the Ćandi. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude

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[17] Jagadīśvarānanda, ch. 4, vs. 10.

[18] Jagadīśvarānanda, ch. 4, vs. 7.

that the *Caṇḍi* was composed by about 400 A. D., though its concepts are often much earlier.

There is nothing known about the author of the *Caṇḍi*. It seems clear that the *Caṇḍi* is an independent treatise, for it has both the framework of a story and is the kernal of a metaphysical discourse. It is an exceptionally purposeful document, with internal unity and a distinctive poetic excellence not found in the rest of the Purāṇa. It is in some places filled with extravagant praising and a miraculous imagination; its hymns are characterized by a deep religious feeling of devotion and adoration. Perhaps no more can be said of the author than that she/he was a person capable of such inspiration:

> . . . The author of the Devī-Māhātmya was gifted with a rare faculty of synthesis and a deep insight into the manifold forms of the cult of the Mother Goddess prevailing in different parts of the country, which he has assimilated with a broad sympathy and woven the multifarious strands into a finely embroidered fabric of great beauty and variety.[19]

Three Exploits of the Goddess

The *Devī Māhātmyam* recounts the story of the exploits (charitas) of the Great Goddess, who is known at first as Mahāmāyā but has many other names. The story, told by the rishi Medhas to two disciples in answer to their inquiry, recounts three battles between the devas and asuras in which the Great Goddess fights, at the entreaty of the devas, against the

[19] Agrawala, p. iii.

asuras. These two disciples are men who have been forced to leave their former lives and have come to the forest hermitage of the sage Medhas. One man, Suratha, a kshatriya, was a king before he was driven from his kingdom by powerful enemies. The second man, Samadhi, a vaisya, was a wealthy merchant before he was overcome and cast out by his greedy wife and children. These three characters, then, represent archetypes of human personalities. The sage is the wise type, who has resolved all problems through discrimination and knowledge (jñana). The king is the active type, who is overcome by trouble in spite of his good actions; he is a man overcome by karma. The merchant is a confused type, who suffers the plight of those who desire gold and are overcome by moha, lack of discrimination. The problem which Suratha and Samadhi share is their concern about and longing for their earlier lives, even though they know the others do not care for them and that their attachment causes them unhappiness. They set this problem before the sage.

> How happens this then, illustrious Sir, that we are deluded although aware of it, and that this state of delusion besets me and him, who are each blind in respect of discrimination?[20]

The sage tells them that it is through the power of Mahāmāyā that they, and all creatures, are deluded, but that She is also the giver of final enlightenment and liberation. In order to describe the nature of Mahāmāyā, he tells them the three

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20Pargiter, p. 468, canto LXXXI, vs. 33.

exploits (charitas) of the Goddess. After hearing this, the two disciples practice worship of Devī until She appears to them and grants each a boon of his choice. Suratha asks for, and is given, the return of his kingdom and rebirth as Sāvarṇi, the Manu. Samadhi asks for, and is given, supreme knowledge leading to liberation

The paths which each disciple takes represent the two types of spiritual path in Tantric sadhana. In the Tantras, aspirants are divided into three classes, according to their capacity and fitness (adhikāra). The first class is the beast, paśu, who has a predominance of gross physical, sensual, tamasic consciousness. Generally, after some sādhanā, a person of this type evolves into one of the other two types. The second class is the warrior, vīra, the person who has a predominance of vital, prāṇic, rajasic consciousness, and who follows the left path (vāma mārga), the path of delight, represented here by King Suratha. The third type is the divine, divya, who has a predominance of mental, sattvic consciousness, and who follows the right path (dakṣina mārga), the path of knowledge, represented here by Samadhi. Sri Aurobindo describes the two paths in this way:

> . . . In the ancient symbolic sense of the words Dakṣina and Vāma, it was the distinction between the way of knowledge and the way of Ānanda,--Nature in man liberating itself by right discrimination in power and practice of its own energies, elements and potentialities.[21]

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[21]Sri Aurobindo, cited by M. P. Pandit, Lights on the Tantra (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1971), p. 51.

It is clear that neither path is of greater value except to the individual who is drawn to it. The right path, dakṣina mārga, has been practiced and extolled by ascetic spiritual teachers as the safest, if not the only, path. But in the Tantric teaching it is recognized that people vary in potentialities and stage of development. Through too much ascetic withdrawal from the world, the aspirant on the right path, dakṣina mārga, may create aversion to, and blockage of, sensation which will keep her/him attached to the very thing she/he is trying to overcome. The goal of the left path, in Aurobindonian terms, is enjoyment of the physical with a spiritualized vital.

> . . . It requires great courage and mental fortitude to seek the light in darkness, to search for the Beauty and Delight in the ugliness and misery of mortal existence. This is the aim of vāmācāra and in this sādhanā, things that degrade the soul of man are themselves utilised for its upliftment.[22]

The first charita of the Goddess begins at the end of a kalpa, when there is no creation and the universe is all ocean with Vishṇu sleeping on Ananta, the serpent of infinity, on this ocean. Brahmā, the god of knowledge, arises on a lotus from Vishṇu's navel, and Madhu and Kaiṭabha, two asuras, arise from the dirt of Vishṇu's ear and attempt to kill Brahmā. Brahmā seeks to wake Vishṇu by extolling the Goddess, Śakti, of Vishṇu, Yoganidrā, Queen of the Universe, who is the Sleep

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[22] S. Shankaranarayanan, Glory of the Divine Mother (Pondicherry: Dipti Publications, 1968), pp. 12-13.

of Vishṇu. When She is praised, She rises out of Vishṇu and He awakes so he can battle the asuras. Then She clouds the asuras' minds with a delusion and Vishṇu destroys them.

The second charita opens at the defeat of Indra and the devas by Mahishāsura, King of the asuras. The devas go to Śiva and Vishṇu to tell of their defeat. The devas all become incensed and out of their anger a light arises which gathers into a mass of intense energy, lighting the sky with its blaze, and takes shape as a female. Equipped with the special weapons of each of the devas, She battles with and defeats Mahishāsura. The devas then compose a hymn of praise to Her and She gives them the boon of promising to aid them in their difficulties.

The third charita opens as the second, after the defeat of the devas, this time at the hands of the asuras Śumbha and Niśumbha. The devas remember the Devī's boon and offer Her a hymn. The Goddess Ambikā arises out of Parvati's body in response to the devas' praise and displays Her most lovely form on the Mountain Himālaya, in order to capture the attention of the asuras. She appeals to the pride of Śumbha, who decides that since he possesses the most beautiful object of every kind, he must possess this gem of womanhood. However, She refuses his offer, stating that She had made a vow to be the wife only of the man who vanquishes Her in battle. Śumbha, in a rage, sends one army after another to fight Her and each is defeated by Devī and Her emanations. For, first, Kālī "of terrible countenance" issues forth from Her, and then the

Śaktis of the devas come from the bodies of the devas to aid Her. These Śaktis are collectively referred to as the Seven Mothers, or the "band of Mothers." After they destroy the asura named Raktabīja, they are intoxicated with blood and break into a dance.

Śumbha challenges Devī with fighting unfairly, since She has so much help. She replies:

> 'Alone verily am I in the world here; what other goddess is there beside me? See, vile one! that these goddesses, who have their divine power from me, are entering into me indeed.'
> Then all those goddesses, Brahmāṇī and the others, became absorbed into the goddess' breasts; Ambikā then remained alone indeed.
> 'Whereas I existed with my divine power in many forms here--that has been drawn in by me, truly alone I stand now.'[23]

After a fierce battle he is defeated, and the devas burst into a tremendous hymn of praise. The Devī reaffirms her boon to people and tells of seven of the forms She will take to aid people in future crises. The final chapter of the Caṇḍi seems to be a later addition to the text, adding nothing in the way of action, but stating the benefits to be derived from the chanting of these hymns and stories.

Having briefly discussed the mythological framework or story-line of the Caṇḍi, it is possible to take an interpretive view and examine some of the main themes and symbols, with an eye to their inner meaning.

The theme which forms the basis of the Caṇḍi is the conflict between light and dark, between the devas and asuras

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[23]Pargiter, pp. 509-10, Canto XC, vs. 3-5.

(daivāsura), between order and disorder (yajña and ayajña). This is not an accidental conflict, but one basic to the very structure and essence of the cosmos. It originates from the first movement, the first spark of activity in unmanifest unconsciousness, the infinite Womb of the Great Mother. In Vedic language, in the state of Self-existent Reality, Svayambhū, the predominant guṇa is sattva and there is no movement, no struggle; a state of stasis prevails. From the state of Parameshṭhī, which has a predominance of the rajasic guna, energy and movement arise; therefore objects, which originate in movement, arise, duality and conflict arise. In the realm of pure light there is no conflict, but in this world which arises only with energy in the realm of Parameshṭhī, there is both light and dark, and therefore conflict is ever present. In Jungian terms, consciousness arises out of conflict and differentiates itself from unconsciousness.

The interesting thing about this conflict is that, though it arises with duality, both sides of the conflict are seen to originate from the same source, from "the great devī as also the great asurī,"[24] Mahādevī and Mahāsurī, the archetypal feminine Great Round. The power which is in the asuras is also a form of the Goddess, which is the reason it must be confronted and dealt with and cannot simply be hidden or avoided. This is quite different from the conflict as it is seen in Christianity. In Christian myth, evil is external to the nature of the divine reality, and must be extinguished so that

[24] Jagadīśvarānanda, ch. 1, vs. 77.

one lives only in the good, pure light for eternity; which is to say, one must leave the relative world of Parameshṭhī and life. This is a kingdom that can be found only "after death," obviously. But the cosmos of the Goddess is discovered and experienced here, in the relative world of light and dark, devas and asuras, conflict, triumph, and defeat. It is not found in denial, but in fulfillment.

In the first charita of the Goddess, the conflict occurs between Brahmā, an emanation of Vishṇu and the giver of the Vedas, and Madhu and Kaiṭabha. These three characters represent the three guṇas. Brahmā is sattva and, ". . . functions as the substratum against which the two other forces of centrifugal and centripetal motion become manifest."[25] Madhu and Kaiṭbha are rajas and tamas, the two types of motion which make up, with their substratum, the material world. These three move on the cosmic form of Vishṇu, pure sattva, sleeping on the snake of infinity, Ananta, in the blissful honey ocean of Unconsciousness. The equilibrium of the three guṇas is disturbed when the asuras try to kill Brahmā, and conflict arises.

As the conflict arises, the Goddess appears in response to the hymn of Brahmā. There are two functions or aspects which the Goddess expresses here. First, She is addressed as Yoganidrā, the sleep of Vishnu, the tamasic aspect of Mahāmāyā, the elementary pole of the archetypal feminine. As long as She is within Vishṇu, he is self-absorbed, asleep, uncreative.

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[25] Agrawala, p. 12.

It is only when She withdraws from him that he can create. Even the Lord of all devas, Vishṇu, is under the power of night, the unconsciousness of the Goddess. Secondly, the demons are killed by Vishṇu, but their death is actually caused by their self-destructive pride which is the result of the delusion Mahāmāyā spreads over them. So Mahāmāyā has the power to delude, confuse, and thus destroy all creatures, devas, asuras and people, the transformative pole of the feminine. Both of these functions of the Goddess stem from her aspect as Rātri, or Night and the Unconscious.

The second charita is concerned with a situation in which heaven, the realm of the devas, the realm of pure consciousness, vijñana, is clouded by the gloom and delusion of the asuras. The image of a buffalo-asura named Mahisha circling around heaven and trying to penetrate it is found in the Vedas (Rig Veda 10. 189. 2), so it is clear that the roots of this story are quite old. Mahisha is the demon of the region called Mahat or Parameshṭhī, symbolised as the Ocean or Waters. This region is beyond the sphere of heaven, of Surya, Indra or Vishṇu, who simply rest upon it.

> . . . The Great Goddess presiding over the Mahat or Virāj, namely the Universal, finds her counterpart in the Universal Asura called Mahisha.[26]

The Sanskrit root of both 'mahat' and 'mahisha' is 'mah,' meaning to magnify or become great, which suggests their hidden

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[26] Agrawala, p. 5.

inner relationship, although on the surface they are in conflict. Mahishāsura is magnified or vast, but it is a dense tamasic buffalo vastness, like a mass of stubborn stupidity puffed up with egoism and insolence. The realm of Mahat, Virāj, or Parameshṭhī is vast in a very different sense. She is the universal mother principle in whose womb the universe exists in nascent form, the womb of universal waters in which all worlds exist in an undifferentiated form, the elementary feminine.

> . . . She is the same as Mahad-Brahma or Yoni, in which the self-existent Creator deposits His seed. It is therefore the latent power of motherhood that carries forward the creative possibilities in the region of Mahat or the Universal.[27]

No conflict would arise if Mahishāsura would only stay in the dark waters where all is included in the uroboric Great Mother, but he does not. Instead, he flouts Indra in the realm of conscious mind, and then he must be opposed. It is then that Devī must enter into the conflict and oppose the principle of disorder, which is a part of, and yet would destroy, Her creation.

> . . . The omniform universe is the outcome of the mysterious source that is the mother's womb, to which infinite divinity has confided all the secrets and miraculous powers. Each mother, whether of plants, animals, or men is the type of the archetypal Mother Goddess, Mahā Devī, Mahī Mātā. It is She who creates the Bhūtas or material forms, namely the Asuras, and therefore the responsibility to keep them under control belongs to Her.[28]

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[27]Agrawala, p. 18. [28]Agrawala, p. 25.

The form of the Goddess who arises to defeat Mahishāsura is made of the emanations of energy from the devas. Creation through emanation occurs several times in the second and third charitas. The Seven Mothers are also created from the externalization of energy given off by the devas. The emanations of the devas which are their Śaktis are all dressed in the same apparel and carrying the same emblems as the devas with whom they are related. This clearly is symbolic of the union of male and female in the Indian conception of the divine. The Devī who appears from these emanations is not simply an aggregate of the gods, however; She is an integral entity functioning as a unity. For She is not really created by the devas. It is simply the appearance in form which She takes. For it is from Her power that all those who have bodies do have them, even the devas. She is the power, Śakti, by and through which all creation occurs, as well as the substratum of all material reality.

Devī appears in the third charita by means of emanation, but here it is an emanation from Herself as She differentiates Herself into Kauśikī and Kālī. The symbol is that of Pārvatī, the daughter of the mountain, who comes to bathe in the Ganga, after the devas chant a hymn of praise to Devī.

> . . . The Mountain is the body itself as a kūta or pile of the gross material elements. His daughter Pārvatī is identical with what in the Tantras is known as Kuṇḍalinī, that is, the vital energy of the psycho-physical man. Pārvatī has the composite form of Śiva, that is, the Ardha-nārīśvara form in which the male half is the symbol of Agni and the female half is that of Soma. Gaṅgā represents the river of Soma

> taking her birth from the Ocean of Soma in the region of Parameshṭhī. By a dip in the Gaṅgā, the Great Goddess bifurcates Her person into Soma as Kauśikī and into Agni as Kālikā. Kauśikī is Her auspicious or beautiful form (saumyā) and Kālī or Kālikā is Her terrific and destructive form (Āgneyī, ghorā tanū).[29]

So the symbol suggests that from the one infinite, all-containing, undifferentiated womb of the Divine Mother, not only the duality of the world arises, but also the dual aspect of the Goddess. This dual aspect is symbolized in Vedic images as Agni and Soma. Agni is fire, energy, the father, the eater of food, the giver of the Seed of life. Soma is matter, is the food which is eaten, the mother, and the receiver of life. Both of these principles are fundamental for creation and the source of both is hidden in the Mother's Womb. Agni is said to be black, like the wick of an oilless lamp, unless mixed with Soma.

> . . . Agni without soma is terrific but with Soma auspicious. Both the forms inhere in the same Primeval Goddess. This refers to the ancient doctrine of Agni and Soma, the two together described as Eka-yonī, that is, having a common womb.[30]

In the image of Devī these two forms are called 'saumyā,' auspicious, and 'ghora,' terrible, Kauśikī and Kālī, the positive and negative elementary feminine.

Devī as Kauśikī entices the asuras by arousing their sexual desire and greed, and then She frustrates them, and they become angry. These asuras are characterized by desire and anger, kama and krodha. When they see the beautiful Goddess

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[29]Agrawala, p. 21. [30]Agrawala, p. 16.

they rush to devour Her, but instead She devours them. The first two asuras who come to fight are Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa. Chaṇḍa means fierce, indicating the fierce fire which burns in the mūlādhāra, the base ćakra. Muṇḍa means head, referring to the moon in the sahasrāra, crown ćakra. Symbolically, then, these asuras represent the fire which is the basis of energy but which is usually smokey and the head which is clouded with mental activity and unable to respond clearly, so that prāṇic energy is thwarting rather than aiding the will.

> . . . Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa represent the Asuric nature of Prāṇa. Muṇḍa literally is the Head or the Idea and Chaṇḍa is the headless torso wherein most of the organs of action, i.e., karendriyas are located which are responsible for the fierceness or impetuosity of action or Karma.[31]

It is Kālī, then, who emerges from Devī to battle these asuras.

> . . . In this form She is Chāmuṇḍā, the All-consuming Fiery Energy who tramples on the corpse (the symbol of matter without prāṇa), whose breasts are dried without motherly compassion, whose body is a skeleton with creeping deadly reptiles.[32]

On the mental plane, She is the force of concentrated awareness in the waking state which calms the cloudy mind and allows it to receive the kuṇḍalinī energy, arising from the mūlādhāra. The asura Raktabīja symbolizes this incessant mental activity of one thought leading to the next constantly, as his drops of blood falling on the ground create ever new asuras to battle. He also symbolizes evil's incredible capacity to multiply itself endlessly and to regenerate itself in the midst of its

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[31] Agrawala, p. 20. [32] Agrawala, p. 21.

own destruction. Chāmuṇḍa is required to drink every drop of his blood (thoughts, evils) so it cannot touch earth (the mother) but is absorbed by her concentrated awareness. Only then can triumph and peace of mind result. The battle with Śumbha and Niśumbha assures this victory. Their names come from the Sanskrit root 'Śumbha,' to shine, and they represent light (as do the devas, 'div,' to shine), but not the light of the Sun, Ātman, but the light of ego which leads them to desire to possess everything, including Devī. Mentally, then, they symbolize the negative thoughts, stemming from ego-consciousness, which cancel positive decision and create confusion, moha. When they are defeated, then the mind is psychologically clear and can receive guidance from the divine will.

Concept and Symbols of Devī

The major and underlying theme in the concept of Devī is that She is the Supreme Mother principle who has created all things, who is the substratum or ground of all being, immanent as the very life-energy or power (Śakti), of all being, the divine Unconscious as well as the principle of consciousness, the source of good and evil, the elementary feminine archetype. She is the principle of relatedness or connection between beings, since it is She that all share in common. She is the Great Mystery which awaits the person who asks the question of how One became Many, for She is the Great Multiplier as the many are born from Her, and She waits to reclaim all as they sink back into the One. In this aspect She is symbolized as

Paramesṭhī, the Waters, the Ocean, Mahat, the Universal, Virāj, the Cosmic Cow, the Great Womb in which the universe resides.

This theme is stated most clearly in Devī's reply to Śumbha, after absorbing all the other goddesses into Herself:

> In this world, I, the one, alone exist. Who is the second person other than myself? . . . I, by manifold manifestations, stood here in many forms. These are now withdrawn by me. Alone I stand.[33]

This is a clear affirmation of monism, parallel to the concept in the Upaniṣads of Brahman as One without a Second. Devī is equivalent to Brahman, or as She is described in Tantric texts, She is the power or Śakti of Brahman, inseparable, non-different.

This aspect of the Goddess as Mother has both a positive and a negative side, as has been seen in the emergence of the Kauśikī and Kālī forms from Devī. In Her positive form, She is the Womb, the source of all, the mother of devas and asuras, the positive elementary feminine. She is said to create the universe, moveable and unmoveable, and to "exist eternally, embodied as the world."[34] She is the source of both the existent and the non-existent.

> . . . And whatever or wherever a thing exists, conscient (real) or non-conscient (unreal), whatever power all that possesses is yourself.[35]

Since all things are a part of Her, She loves them all equally with deep, compassionate love. All is encompassed within Her

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33Shankaranarayanan, p. 243-4, ch. 10, vs. 5,8.

34Jagadīśvarānanda, ch. 1, vs. 53.

35Jagadīśvarānanda, ch. 1, vs. 52.

love. Metaphysically, this is to say that all form emerges from Her, therefore all beings are created by and through Her power, Śakti. Therefore every object and experience of life must be confronted and embraced as a manifestation of the Divine Mother. It is said of Her:

> . . . you are terrible and at the same time you are pleasing, yea, more pleasing than all the pleasing things and exceedingly beautiful.[36]

This expresses the attitude of reverence toward the Mother and all creation which is taught in the Caṇḍī as helpful to the spiritual aspirant.

The negative side of this aspect of Devī as Mother is symbolized in Vedic and Purāṇic thought as Rātri, the Great Night. Brahmā addresses Devī in the form of Rātri as the:

> . . . universal substratum from whose womb the entire creation emanates including both the Devas and the Asuras. She is the Great Mother who controls and regulates both the universal and the individual manifestations.[37]

But She is also invoked as the dark source of prāṇa, Kālarātri, the "dark night of periodic dissolution"; as the dark source of mind, Mahārātri, the "great night of final dissolution"; and as the dark source of the five elements, Moharātri, the "terrible night of delusion."[38]

> . . . Rātri is the principle of darkness or absorption of all light. (Ṛig Veda I. 35. 1) Rātri is the transcendent mother concealing in her womb all manifest forms. The entire

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[36]Jagadīśvarānanda, ch. 1, vs. 31.

[37]Agrawala, p. 22.

[38]Jagadīśvarānanda, ch. 1, vs. 7?.

> conception of Devī-Vidyā is related to the principle of Rātri, i.e., Primeval Darkness.[39]

She is the great destroyer, as well as creator and sustainer, Kālī, the Dark Goddess. She destroys by drawing everything back into Herself at the time of cosmic dissolution, e.g., Yoganidrā who makes Vishṇu sleep. But She also is the destroyer of evil beings, e.g., the asuras, and it is Her power of destruction that gives power to Her grace and mercy. One particular point which the Caṇḍi makes is that even in destroying the asuras, She is purifying them and therefore bringing about their liberation, much as they, and the asuric parts of all people, may resist this purification. She destroys delusions and worldly infatuations and grants liberation, Devī Vidya, as She does for Samādhi, a function of the positive transformative feminine. However, She is also the cause of delusion and infatuation, Mahāmāyā, Devī Avidya, as She does for Madhu and Kaiṭabha, a function of the negative transformative feminine.

It is this aspect of Rātri as Māyā, the negative transformative, limiting, finitizing, deluding power of Devī, which bewitches and enchants the human mind with attachment to the temporal things of the world. It is the suffering resulting from this attachment which causes King Suratha and Samadhi to approach the sage and pose the question which forms the core of this text. Rishi Medhas clearly affirms that māyā is the direct result of Devī's action in the world. She is not an

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[39]Agrawala, p. 15.

imaginary delusion which passes away upon the attainment of Enlightenment, as in the view of Śaṅkara, who maintained that the power of Māyā, Śakti, is an attribute of saguṇa Brahman, but is not found ultimately in the absolute, nirguṇa Brahman. But in Caṇḍī, Śakti is not an attribute as the guṇas are attributes, but is a real power and entity: "Illusions may cease but She is the power that causes illusions and is also the power that destroys them."[40] Thus, She is not lost, disregarded, or transcended, but is identified as the one divine principle:

> . . . The entire philosophy of the Caṇḍī stands or falls with the acceptance or otherwise of the ultimacy of the principle of Śakti as a fundamental character of the ultimate metaphysical principle.[41]

The second aspect of Devī that is significant in the Caṇḍī, as in all Tantric scriptures, is Her character as Śakti, power or energy. It is difficult to distinguish this aspect from Her nature as womb, substratum, and creatrix of the universe, for it is said that all this is accomplished through Her power. In the hymn of chapter 5, She is extolled as the all-pervading power and foundation of all things, as the concrete form of the totality of celestial and earthly powers. She is the power behind the Vedas, the liberating efficacy of Vedic ritual. In relationship to finite beings, She is the very Life-principle, prāṇa, and is the power of consciousness which enlivens all sentient beings. This hymn lists twenty-three

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[40] S. S. Raghavachar, "Durgā Saptaśatī," Vedanta Kesari, February 1975, p. 359.

[41] Raghavachar, p. 359.

human qualities which are extolled as manifestations of the Mother's presence immanently in the world and in the self. She is extolled as Vishṇu-māyā and then addressed:

> To the Goddess who among all created beings
> Bears the name Consciousness,
> Reverence to her, yea, reverence to her,
> Reverence to her, reverence, yea, reverence![42]

All the other characteristics stem from this power of consciousness, i.e., the qualities of intellect, sleep, hunger, shadow, energy, thirst, patience, modesty, faith, loveliness, good fortune, activity, memory, mercy, contentment, error, pervasiveness, and the very principle of Motherhood itself. Thus, the Goddess is seen as the divine consciousness which descends to and permeates the plane of matter, as is obvious since it is She who, as the gunas, composes it. The spirit of this hymn is deeply devotional, advocating utter self-surrender to all manifestations of Devī: "Whatever or wherever a thing is, whether good or bad, thou art the energy which all that possesses, O thou who art the soul of everything."[43] This includes everything. Nothing is inherently evil, for all is divine in origin, but this does not deny the need for discrimination.

One particular aspect of Devī's power is constantly turned to in the Caṇḍī: Her power as grace. Each of the hymns is an appeal to Devī as helper and protectress of those devotees who consider themselves Her children and call to Her.

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[42]Agrawala, p. 79, ch. 5, vs. 13.

[43]Pargiter, p. 471, canto LXXXI, vs. 63.

She is seen as the unfailing refuge for all beings who are virtually lost. She gives and reaffirms the boon that She will come to aid those who simply remember Her name and call upon Her. One way that is recommended for doing this is recitation of the Ćandi itself. Some of the dangers which Devī will protect the devotee from are listed in the hymn of chapter 11, including the psychological, physical, and spiritual. She is said to preserve creatures as the earth, to sustain them as water, and to illumine them as the sun, moon, and fire. She is the power of the law of karma which brings equality to all beings, for all invariably must reap what they sow. She is the creative power manifest in motherhood and is present in all women as well as in all mothers of every species. She is the saving wisdom which illumines the Vedas. Her soul is sound and manifest in the Gayatri mantram, as the very source of creation. She takes away all fears and troubles, brings happiness and a good life, and grants final illumination.

The tone in which this hymn is made is not one of the worthiness or unworthiness of the devotee, for even the ability of an individual to attain righteousness is seen as a gift of the Mother. It rather seems to be the trusting attitude of a child toward its mother who compassionately loves each of her children equally. Each is special and unique, yet all are Her children. Neither the devotee nor child can do anything to earn or deserve the love of their Mother, for Her love is freely given as the very gift of life, energy, śakti itself.

"The Mother feeds as and when the children wail for food."[44] It is important for the child to ask, for the devotee to pray, for otherwise the śakti, life-flow is experienced with resistance, as purgation, rather than experienced with ease, as a dance, as grace. The premise here is that the basic cause of moral evil is not recognizing the divine Mother behind Her māyā, Her veil of transitory phenomena. The solution is found in devotion to the Mother, and all the hymns of the Ćandi are fundamentally prayers of adoration and surrender. In the mythological story, this is affirmed as Suratha and Samadhi practice worship of Devī, receive a vision of Her, and attain the goal each desires. But the heart of the Ćandi's teaching is found in these hymns which are not simply an intellectually interesting description of the divine nature, but are a practical means available to each person now to practice with the aim of increasing one's consciousness of the Mother, who is dancing behind and through the whirling transiency of phenomenal experience. It is suggested that this aim is best accomplished in surrender of ego, or of that sense of false control or manipulation over events, of an habitual mental aversion or attraction to events of one's life. And this is best accomplished, not through complicated kuṇḍalinī yogic practices or ritualized worship, but simply through remembrance of the Divine Mother.

A final aspect of the energy, śakti, of Devī makes the efficacy of a devotional path very clear. One name by which

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[44]Raghavachar, p. 390.

Devī is evoked is Kātyāyanī, which comes from the root 'kati,' meaning how much or what. Thus, Kātyāyanī points to Her nature as the Great Question, the Supreme Mystery, always ultimately unknown, no matter what name She is called. The *Ćandi* is ultimately:

> . . . an adoration of the Supreme Mother principle which creates all the worlds with its mysteries that are being unfolded in time and space and also that are beyond them. Such a power herself is eternal mystery. The Great Question which howsoever intensively it may be bombarded, yet remains a riddle without solution, a veil which has not been lifted, a mystery which has not been comprehended. Such is the Majesty of this Goddess.[45]

This is the true nature of Mahāmāyā who veils Her majestic mystery. It is to little avail to attempt only to understand the divine nature, since it is ultimately not comprehendable, veiled to the intellect. It is more efficacious to remember and to love the Great Goddess who reveals Her beautiful, blissful, veiled form to Her children, granting them happiness and liberation.

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[45] Agrawala, p. 223.

Chapter 7

SYMBOLS OF THE GREAT GODDESS

Having described the elementary and transformative types of the Archetypal Feminine from a Jungian perspective (chapter 3); and viewed the origins of goddess worship in the Paleolithic and Neolithic eras with the aid of this typology (chapter 4); and having analyzed in depth the transformative feminine image of the tropical planting culture as expressed in the philosophical form of the Śākta Tantras (chapter 5) and _Devī-Māhātmyam_ (chapter 6), the point is reached at which some of the basic symbolic motifs of the Great Goddess can be delineated. These basic symbols can then serve as a focus through which to examine the feminine imagery expressed in Christian myth and dogma.

The first and all-encompassing theme is that the Goddess cannot be named by one name alone, but She is one Goddess with Many Names. This is expressed clearly in the _Devī-Māhātmyam_ in which she is invoked by more than two hundred names, and in which she states:

> In this world, I, the one, alone exist. Who is the second person other than myself? . . . I, by manifold manifestations stood here in many forms. These are now withdrawn by me. Alone I stand.[1]

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[1]S. Shankaranarayanan, _Glory of the Divine Mother_ (Pondicherry: Dipti Publications, 1968), pp. 243-44, ch. 10, vs. 5,3.

She is Śakti, the divine energy of which all forms are composed and into which all forms dissolve, She is Prakṛti, or Pṛthivi, the Earth or Matter, the substratum out of which all material things are formed. She is the Great Multiplier, who as Māyā makes the One appear as Many, that Māyā who is the source of the universe, who deludes the universe and who graciously grants final emancipation to the universe through Her transforming knowledge (vidyā).[2] In the Devī-Māhātmyam she is described as the great devī (goddess) and the great asurī (demoness), that is, she is the one who is the origin of both.

As the one mysterious origin of all life, she is the Womb, Vessel, or Container in the absolute sense. That is, she contains all polar opposites, good and evil, male and female. Neumann refers to this polarity as the two sides of the great uroboric Mother Goddess.

> The overwhelming might of the unconscious, i.e., the devouring, destructive aspect under which it may also manifest itself, is seen figuratively as the evil mother, whether as the bloodstained goddess of death, plague, famine, flood, and the force of instinct, or as the sweetness that lures to destruction. But, as the good mother, she is fullness and abundance; the dispenser of life and happiness, the nutrient earth, the cornucopia of the fruitful womb. She is mankind's instinctive experience of the world's depth and beauty, of the goodness and graciousness of Mother Nature who daily fulfills the promise of redemption and resurrection, of new life and new birth.[3]

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[2]Swami Jagadīśvarānanda, Devī-Māhātmyam or Śrī Durgā-Saptaśati (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 19[illegible]), ch. 11, vs. 5.

[3]Erich Neumann, Origins and History of Consciousness, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1962), pp. 39-40.

The wicked, devouring mother and the good mother lavishing affection seem to be the two aspects of the Goddess which appear as primary imprinting patterns out of the One Goddess with Many Names.

> And so, in mythology and rite, as well as in the psyche of the infant, we find the imagery of the mother associated almost equally with beatitude and danger, birth and death, the inexhaustible nourishing breast and the tearing claws of the ogress.[4]

From the Paleolithic era the Goddess has been worshipped as Mother of Life and Death. Within the Neolithic tropical planting cultures her death aspect has been seen as fundamental to the transformation of life. In the later Neolithic stage when ego consciousness has just emerged and only stands with faltering independence, the unconscious is symbolized as the Great Mother and ego-consciousness as her son-lover.

> . . . The figure of the son-lover follows on the stage of embryo and child. By differentiating himself from the unconscious and reaffirming his masculine otherness, he very nearly becomes the partner of the maternal unconscious; he is her lover as well as her son. But he is not yet strong enough to cope with her, he succombs to her in death and is devoured. The mother-beloved turns into the terrible Death Goddess.[5]

The Earth Mother is only made fruitful through death and sacrifice; as the seed dies when it is planted in the ground; and the female screams in the labor of giving birth to a child. But this natural aspect of death-in-life is seen in an

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[4]Joseph Campbell, Masks of God: Primitive Mythology (New York: Viking Press, 1959), p. 71.

[5]Neumann, p. 47.

unnatural way by the emerging ego-consciousness, which Neumann has identified as masculine within both women and men.

> . . . The emotional, passionate nature of the female in wild abandon is a terrible thing for man and his consciousness. The dangerous side of woman's lasciviousness, although suppressed, misunderstood, and minimized in patriarchal times, was still a living experience in earlier ages. Deep down in the evolutionary stratum of adolescence, the fear of it still dwells in every man and works like a poison wherever a false conscious attitude represses this layer of reality into the unconscious.[6]

The fear arises from the ego's own desire for self-surrender and regression, which at that stage would mean dissolution back into the unconscious. This desire for uroboric incest ultimately would mean the dissolution of death, symbolized as the cave, earth, tomb, sarcophagus, and coffin. This masculine ego fear of the feminine as the Dissolver or Destroyer, then, is seen to result from the ego's own desire for regression and fear of its own desire. The feminine is identified with this desire, within the patriarchal view, and then is seen in great fear and trembling as a bloody, savage Goddess. But this patriarchal view of the Death Goddess is clearly different from the older Goddess of Birth and Death, who claimed in death those who would be reborn anew from her infinite womb.

<u>Goddess of Life and Death</u>

The major symbolic motif to be examined here, then, is the double-aspected Goddess of Life and Death characteristic

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[6]Neumann, pp. 57-8.

of the "essentially organic, vegetal, non-heroic view"[7] of the Bronze Age matriarchies before the violent invasions of late Bronze and early Iron Age nomadic Āryan cattle herders and Semetic sheep and goat herders. It will prove to be very illuminating to compare this lunar view of the goddess, which allows both light and dark to coexist, as moonlight does, with the view of the feminine as seen by the solar patriarchal hero who separates polarities, even as the sun banishes darkness, allowing light alone.

> . . . In the older mother myths and rites the light and darker aspects of the mixed thing that is life had been honored equally and together, whereas in the later, male-oriented, patriarchal myths, all that is good and noble was attributed to the new, heroic master gods, leaving to the native nature powers the character only of darkness--to which, also a negative moral judgment now was added.[8]

One example of the double-aspected goddess is the Babylonian Goddess Ishtar, whose name is related to the Sanskrit root 'strim,' which is related to the name of the Buddhist goddess Tārā. She is also related to many goddesses in the Near East.

> . . . She was Ashtarte in Canaan; Astar in Mesopotamia; Ashtar in Moab; Athtar in Southern Arabia; Astar in Abyssinia; Atargatis in Syria; Astarte in Greece; while Artemis seems to be the general term used for any of the many manifestations of this great and all-powerful goddess--the Magna Dea of the East.[9]

7Joseph Campbell, Masks of God: Occidental Mythology (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p. 21.

8Campbell, Occidental Mythology, p. 21.

9M. Esther Harding, Woman's Mysteries Ancient and Modern (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p. [illegible].

One Goddess with Many Names. As moon goddess she took the place of her father, Sinn, Lord of the Moon, and was figured sometimes as male, sometimes as female. As her image develops, though, she becomes identified with the planet Venus and is seen as goddess of fertility and sexuality. At this stage she is differentiated from her "older sister" Erishkigal, who is Queen of the Underworld. As Queen of the Stars, with a special relationship to the Morning Star, she rules not only the constellations of the zodiac, which were called Houses of the Moon, but she controlled the entire zodiac belt, which was called the "girdle of Ishtar."[10] She was in charge, then, of the lunar calendar and functioned as Goddess of Time. Here she may be compared to the Indian goddess Kālī, whose name is the feminine form of 'Kāla,' meaning time. As Goddess of Time both figures not only create but destroy everything, for all things within time perish. In the Devī-Māhātmya She is saluted in this way:

> . . . O you who in the form of minutes, moments and other divisions of time, bring about change in things, and have thus the power to destroy the universe.[11]

Both Kālī and Ishtar have well-developed destructive aspects. Ishtar, as Ereshkigal, rules the underworld, making storms and wars, a goddess of the terrors of the night, who also gives dreams, omens, and revelations. Ishtar, as moon goddess, descends to the depths of the underworld to meet with her dark

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[10] Harding, p. 193.

[11] JagadĪśvarānanda, ch. 11, vs. 9.

sister-self and rises again to become the goddess of immortality, she who has descended and risen again. Kālī is the figure Ramakrishna saw rise from the ocean, give birth to an infant, suckle it lovingly, and masticate it--surely an accurate image of the effect time has on each human being.

In the Devī-Māhātmyam the figure of Kālī is seen as emerging with Kauśikī from the form of Pārvatī, daughter of the Mountain. Pārvatī here, then, is a composite figure, comprising not only good and evil, soma and agni, but also male and female,[12] the undifferentiated womb-vessel. She differentiates herself into the beautiful Kauśikī, who displays her charms in order to entice the demons, and the ugly, horrifying Kālī, who devours the demons.

The Minoan Goddess of Doves and Serpents is another ancient example of the goddess of double aspects. Her roots are documented in Old Europe with the Bird Goddess and Serpent Goddess from about 7000 B. C., by Gimbutas, and in Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt from at least 5500 B. C., by Campbell. As Dove Goddess she represents the celestial goddess who rules the heavens, symbolized at Knossos by clay sealings showing doves perched on houses, pillars, double-axes, and trees, as well as on the female image herself. As Serpent Goddess she represents the chthonic and underworld goddess who dwells beneath the earth, knows the secret of immortality, and represents dark, instinctual, spontaneous sources of energy. The

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[12]See above, ch. 6, pp. 164-65.

female form of the goddess, with doves perched on her shoulders, serpents coiling around her arms and raising their heads as a tiara upon her head, symbolizes the Great Earth Mother of all life forms, who rules not only the earth, but the worlds above, and life and death.

In the Greek Eleusinian Mysteries the double figure of Demeter-Persephone is revered. Kerenyi argues that both Demeter and Persephone express the archetype of the Primordial Maiden or Kore through the mythologem of the reluctant goddess.

> . . . The primordial god and goddess undergo endless transformations before they come together; the maiden dies, and in her place there appears an angry goddess, a mother, who bears the Primordial Maiden--herself--again in her daughter.[13]

The original Kore Maiden came from the north of Greece, as did Artemis, as a horse and was raped by the stallion form of Poseidon. Then she is called Demeter Erinys, the angry goddess, and gives birth to a daughter who is called "Mistress," or "She who is not to be named," or Persephone, meaning "Voice of Terror." Persephone's rape, then, is a mirroring of her mother's rape, as each woman dies as a maiden in order to be reborn as a mother. The Kore, then, is actually an incident in Demeter's life; or, as Jung interprets it:

> Demeter and Kore, mother and daughter, extend the feminine consciousness both upwards and downwards. They add an 'older and younger,' 'stronger

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[13] C. Kerenyi, "Kore," C. G. Jung and C. Kerenyi, _Essays on a Science of Mythology_, trans. R. F. C. Hull, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), p. 137.

> and weaker' dimension to it and widen out the narrowly limited conscious mind bound in space and time, giving it intimations of a greater and more comprehensive personality which has a share in the eternal course of things. . . . The psyche pre-existent to consciousness (e.g., the child) participates in the maternal psyche on the one hand, while on the other it reaches across to the daughter psyche. We could therefore say that every mother contains her daughter in herself and every daughter her mother, and that every woman extends backwards into her mother and forwards into her daughter. This participation and intermingling give rise to that peculiar uncertainty as regards _time_: a woman lives earlier as a mother, later as a daughter.[14]

The two aspects described here are mother and daughter, or mother and maid as Jane Harrison distinguishes them from the earlier undifferentiated Lady of Wild Things of the hunting cultures. For Demeter is a particular aspect of the mother image. She is not Earth-Mother in general but is _Karpophoros_, "She who bears fruit," grain-mother or corn-mother, Chloe, "the Green One," and _Anesidora_, she who lets all this "come up."[15] In her mysteries she does not teach people the use of agriculture, nor does she show people what to do with the grain; she simply displays a mown ear of grain and, through some unutterable gestures, makes its meaning evident. This meaning gave the initiate insight into death and immortality. The grain brings to mind the seed image of the transformative goddess; both grain and Kore vanishing into the underworld before they can become fruitful.

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[14]Carl Jung, "The Psychological Aspects of the Kore," Jung and Kerenyi, _Essays_, p. 162.

[15]Kerenyi, p. 114.

> Mother divided from daughter, and the mown ear, are two symbols of something unspeakably painful that is hidden in the Demeter-aspect of the world; but also of something very consoling. . . . The grain-figure is essentially the figure of both origin and end, of mother and daughter; and just because of that it points beyond the individual to the universal and eternal.[16]

The grain symbolizes rebirth, the pig image discussed in chapter 4 symbolizes rebirth, the sacrificed maiden Kore symbolizes rebirth, and the very idea of an original Mother-Daughter goddess who are a single entity symbolizes rebirth.[17]

Persephone is, then, the underworld aspect of the original Mother-Daughter goddess, as Demeter is the fertile and sorrowing mother. But Persephone does not remain the delicate, flowerlike creature playing in the meadow with her sister Kore maidens. She becomes Queen of the Underworld in the tradition of Ereshkigal, Kālī, and the Serpent Goddess. Indeed, Kerenyi sees in her the Greek idea of non-being, the unique individual who is no more.[18] This powerful and terrifying aspect of Persephone is seen more clearly in the figure of Hecate.

Hecate, who is related to the moon, is the only one who overhears Persephone's screams when she is abducted. One version has Hecate, rather than Demeter, going to the underworld in search of Persephone, which suggests that Hecate may be a double Demeter. Kerenyi speaks of a budlike relationship between these three goddesses, connecting with the themes of

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[16]Kerenyi, p. 117. [17]Kerenyi, p. 123.

[18]Kerenyi, p. 120.

maiden, mother, and the moon, which blooms into a trifold goddess who is mistress of the three realms.

> . . . the Greeks attached the name 'Hecate' to a goddess who united in herself affinities with the moon, a Demetrian nature, and Kore-like characteristics--not only those of Persephone but of Artemis as well.[19]

One characteristic of the Hecate figure is her triple form; she is pictured as one goddess with three faces or as three statues together. Demeter and Kore are two of these faces or personifications, but the three express one inner unity. However, the figure of Hecate has roots preceding this Greek configuration. She was the primary goddess in Caria in western Turkey known as Hecate or Hekate, and represented both the light and dark sides of the moon. In Thessaly she was called Enodia and pregnant women sacrificed to her in order to obtain help at birth. Mysteries and games occurred in her sanctuary at Lagina, expressing her passionate and sometimes orgiastic nature. This aspect was seen by the patriarchs as threatening, and so she became known as a dark and threatening goddess. Dogs were sacrificed to her at Colophon, and in Samothrace at a cave called Zerynthos (near Lagina she is called Zerynthra) dogs were sacrificed and mysteries and orgiastic dances occurred.

The dog was one of the goddess' principal animals from the early Vinča period in Old Europe, about 5000 B. C., and came to be seen either as a dangerous, punitive, nocturnal animal, or as a protector against evil.

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[19]Kerenyi, p. 111.

> The menacing dogs obviously belonged to the Moon Goddess who, like the nightmarish Hekate of early historic times, was worshipped by dogs barking at the moon, and whose principal sacrificial animal was the dog.[20]

Hecate and her dogs were said to journey over the graves of the dead and above sacrificed blood. As Queen of Ghosts, she was mistress of the night road which leads travelers astray. She was goddess of the crossroads, of fate, and of the world of the dead. She was known as Lady of the Night, the Goddess of abundance and eloquence, and a magician who could change into a dog, she-wolf, or mare. One ritual of hers, called Hecate's Supper, consisted of taking food at the dead of the night to crossroads and leaving in on the ground. The worshippers must then leave without looking back, for her dark face must not be seen.[21] She is also the goddess of storms, destruction, and terrors of the night. On August 13 there was a festival to Hecate during which rites were performed to prevent summer storms from destroying the crops; later, in Rome, rites for Diana were held at this time. Diana's dark side is related to Hecate as the vindictive, treacherous Diana of the new moon, symbolized by a rabid dog. This is the Diana who killed Actaeon when he saw her naked, by changing him into a stag which the dogs then tore apart.

However, Hecate, even in her darkest phase, is also,

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[20]Marija Gimbutas, The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 171.

[21]Harding, p. 236.

along with Cybele, called _Antea_, Sender of Nocturnal Visions. An object called Hecate's circle was a golden sphere with a sapphire concealed in the center which was twirled with an ox-hide thong in order to procure revelations of divine things.[22] As Goddess of the Underworld, she is knower of unrevealed things and is connected with magic and, much later, with witchcraft. This aspect can be clearly seen in the figure of Circe, the daughter of Hecate. Circe's name refers to a she-falcon who is a bird of omens, and to _circos_, circle, which is related both to the circling of falcons and the use of the magic circle in enchantment. She is the goddess who fascinates and enchants with sex and drunkenness, leading to the dissolution of ego-consciousness. She appears in her terrible aspect transforming men into swine (pigs again!), which is to say, she brings out their instinctive nature which overcomes them. As mistress of the instincts, men serve her as animals. But Odysseus, a solar hero, with the help of Hermes, god of the caduceus, passes her initiations and then she appears as revealer of dark secrets and offers to guide him to the Underworld.

> . . . In the Odyssey, as in the mythology of Melanesia, the goddess who in her terrible aspect is the cannibal ogress of the Underworld was in her benign aspect the guide and guardian to that realm and, as such, the giver of immortal life.[23]

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[22] Harding, p. [illegible].

[23] Campbell, _Occidental Mythology_, p. 171.

She expresses the negative transformative character of the feminine archetype which must be encountered and faced before the positive transformative feminine who gives inner wisdom and divine revelation can appear. For the Goddess of the Underworld contains dissolution, disintegration, and madness, as well as divine revelation and inspiration.

Hecate is related not only to Demeter and Kore, but also to Cybele and to Artemis. Indeed, it is Kerenyi's conclusion that Hecate, Cybele, Rhea, Demeter, and Artemis are identical in their "pristine state" as the Primordial Kore Maiden.[24] Since the attributes of all of these goddesses can be discovered in the great Neolithic transformative goddess, they would seem to be later differentiations of a formerly all-encompassing goddess. Artemis and Hecate seem to have a special relationship, stemming from their common Anatolian origin and their connection with the moon.

> . . . Whether Artemis and Hekate appear as two goddesses or as one, they both belong to the moon cycle. Hekate, gruesome and linked with death; Artemis, youthful and beautiful, reflecting the purity of untouched nature and linked with motherhood.[25]

Artemis comes to represent the light aspect of the moon and Hecate the dark of the moon. Artemis' name is found as <u>A-ti-mi-te</u> and <u>A-ti-mi-to</u> on Linear B tablets from Pylos, which show her antiquity.[26]

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[24]Kerenyi, p. 136. [25]Gimbutas, p. 197.

[26]Gimbutas, p. 197.

> . . . A terra cotta medallion found in the Athenian Agora portrays a triple-bodied Hekate-Artemis with stag and dog flanking her.[27] She holds a torch, whip and bow-and-arrow.

She is often figured as a huntress, flanked by animals, particularly the stag, bear, and doe. In Homeric hymns she is called the "stag-huntress" and it is particularly as such that the Greeks saw her. But the bear and doe epiphanies are familiar from the transformative goddess of Neolithic Old Europe, and suggest her broader symbolic significance than huntress alone. She is the Lady of Wild Things. In the legend of Aloame she became a doe; and her statue in the Temple of Despoina in Arcadia was clothed with deer pelts. As Artemis of Brauronia she appeared as a bear. Upper class Athenian girls of marriageable age would assume the garb of bears during their initiation into the cult of Artemis of Brauronia and would dance as bears in her honor.[28] As Artemis Eileithyia, "Child-Bearing," she was the birth goddess and protectress of childbirth, but it was birth as all female animals experience it, rather than the social aspect of childbirth which was guarded by Hera. As Bear-Mother, she protected women who, like "bears, witnessed only by their goddess, drop their young in pain among the rocks alone."[29] And she protected the newly born, in the tradition of the Neolithic

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[27]Gimbutas, p. 198. [28]Gimbutas, p. 198.

[29]Vincent Scully, The Earth, the Temple and the Gods, Greek Sacred Architecture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 89.

Bear Mother or Nurse figure. However, in this aspect, she could also cause women to die in childbirth.

> . . . Unlike the Earth-Mother who gives birth to all life, sustains it, and in the end receives it back into her bosom, she [Artemis] reflects the virginity of nature with its brilliance and wildness, with its guiltless purity and its strangeness. And yet, intertwined with this crystal-clear essence were the dark roots of savage nature.[30]

Artemis is the "pure and strong one," surrounded by nymphs and animals, present everywhere in nature but particularly in wild lands. She is the mother of wild beasts, as is seen in the many-breasted statue of Artemis at Ephesos. But she is the dual mother, representing the threatening power of nature, which has pitiless vengeance for those who break her laws. As mother, she is guardian of the gate, i.e., womb, and comes to be seen by the Greeks as a remote and incorruptible guardian. She expresses absolute virginity in its original sense of not being owned by any man, for she resisted marriage as Hera could not. Thus, she is free from domination by men and their laws, and protects the wilds from the rape of the new society of patriarchal men. Her sites in Greece are haunted by her dangerous and watchful presence. Her temple in Sparta, from the eighth century B. C., expresses this sternness in which as Artemis Orthia (Upright) Spartan adolescent boys tried to prove their endurance by stealing as many cheeses as possible from her altar while being whipped.[31] Sacrifices of all sorts were

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[30]Gimbutas, p. 199. (Insert not in original.)

31 Scully, p. 81.

offered to her since, as protector of all life, any living thing was an appropriate offering, including, in the story of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigeneia, human sacrifice; and in the spring festival of Cybele in Asia Minor the shorn genitals of the priests were consecrated to Artemis. Thus, while Artemis represents the light side of which Hecate is the dark, within each separate figure are aspects which may be considered light and dark.

The final example of the double-aspected Goddess to be considered is the relationship between Athene and Medusa. Athene was known to the Greeks as the incarnation and protectress of Athens, the Athenian Kore, and was said to have refused a natural birth and to have leaped forth full-grown from the head of Zeus after he had swallowed Athena's mother, Metis. This is clearly a patriarchally inverted myth of male birth. Actually, Athena's name is found on a Linear B tablet from Knossos, dated about 1400 B. C., as "A-ta-na Po-ti-ni-ja," "to the Lady of Athana." This seems to refer to a local goddess in the Cretan household and palace shrines whose function was as protectress and who was imaged as a serpent goddess. With this connection with the Minoan goddess, earlier links with the Neolithic Serpent and Bird Goddess appear.

> . . . On a black-figure vase from the British Museum a bull is led to sacrifice, followed by a procession of men towards the alter on which a bird, a sea-gull or a duck, perches. Next to the alter stands Athena, equipped with a shield and spear, and behind her is none other than the snake."[32]

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[32] Gimbutas, p. 148..

The serpent often appears crawling on or under her shield, equal in height and standing by her side as her double.[33] On a Corinthian aryballos from the sixth century B. C., a bird with a woman's head is perching behind Athene and at her side is written the word Fous, a variant name of the diver-bird, Aithuia. In Megara there is the cliff of Athena Aithuia, Athene the Diver-bird.[34] In the earliest known picture of the rape of Cassandra on a vase, a large human-headed bird stands behind Athene. By a later period in Greece:

> . . . The bird-form has been shed but Athena is occasionally winged and the bird is her attribute. She sometimes appears in the semblance of a sea eagle, a gull, a swallow, a vulture, or a dove.[35]

Robert Graves suggests an additional source of her origin, stating that she was:

> . . . born on the shores of Lake Tritar in Libya and seems to have been originally before her monstrous rebirth from Father Zeus' head, the Libyan Triple Goddess Neith, whom the Greeks called Lamia, or Libya.[36]

Graves cites Herodotus as recognizing the Libyan Neith as Athene.[37] Neith and Athene were part of a trinity of goddesses whose third member was Medusa. In the legend of Perseus' beheading Medusa, he first has to go to the three Graeae,

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[33]Jane Harrison, Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), p. 306.

[34]Harrison, p. 303. [35]Gimbutas, pp. 147-48.

[36]Robert Graves, The White Goddess (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1946), p. 231.

[37]Graves, p. 439.

"Grey Ones," the three old sisters of Gorgons who had but one eye and one tooth between them, in order to find out where the grove of the three nymphs, who would aid him, was. The Graeae, who were pictured as swans or cranes, were also known as Phorcides, the daughters of Phorcus, whose name became a synonym for the Underworld. The name Phorcus is also related to 'porcus,' the pig.

> . . . Phorcus was also reputedly the father of the Gorgon Medusa, whom the Argives in Pausanias's day described as a beautiful Libyan queen decapitated by their ancestor Perseus after a battle with her armies, and who may therefore be identified with the Libyan snake-goddess Lamia (Neith) whom Zeus betrayed and who afterwards killed children.[38]

The beautiful Libyan queen, or the Great Goddess who Medusa originally was, became the bearer of the Gorgon head whose hair was hissing serpents and whose gaze turned men to stone. It seems clear, though, that the Gorgon's head was a mask used by priestesses on ceremonial occasions to frighten trespassers or to put on the door of ovens or kilns to frighten bad spirits who would affect the baking, a feminine transformation mystery.[39]

> . . . The Gorgon Medusa head became a terror mask, although the Corfu pediment of about 600 B. C. proves that Medusa was originally a Great Goddess.[40]

The myth of Perseus' slaying of Medusa, then, seems to be a screening myth which actually describes a period in the

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38Graves, p. 230. 39Graves, p. 231.

40Gimbutas, p. 69.

thirteenth century B. C. in which the patriarchal Hellenes overran the Goddess' chief shrines and stripped the priestesses of their Gorgon masks.[41]

In any case, Perseus brings the Gorgon head back to Athene, who helped him to gain it, and she fixes it to her chest. The connection between Athene and Medusa is clearly visible in the image of Athene wearing the Gorgon head on her chest. The male-born Olympian goddess who is strong, radiant, calm, and fiercely loyal to her city or male hero and the symbol of the Athenian polis which liberated men from the dark powers and limiting laws of nature, wears upon her chest the dark, serpentine, terrifying goddess of the Underworld whose look paralyzes men with fright. The goddess of both light and dark reappears in the Greek patriarchy's most careful feminine creation. Also, from the veins of Medusa Athene helps the god of healing, Asclepius, to secure blood; for the blood of her left side kills, but the blood of her right side heals and brings back to life. She is like Kālī, who with her right hand offers boons and with her left hand holds a sword.

Medusa, as goddess of the Underworld, is described as sitting in her cave beyond the edge of day, on the road to the golden apple tree. This image is reminiscent of the Melanesian guardian demoness who sits on the road to the Underworld and demands the life of those who pass by her unless she is given a pig as a substitute offering.

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[41]Graves, p. 230.

> . . . the usual form in which Medusa is shown--squatting, arms raised, tongue lolling over the chin, eyes wide--is a pose that is characteristic of the guardian of the other world in the pig cults of Melanesia.[42]

Medusa is also related to Persephone, as Kerenyi points out.

> . . . What we conceive philosophically as the element of non-being in Persephone's nature appears, mythologically, as the hideous Gorgon's head, which the goddess sends forth from the Underworld and which she herself bore in her archaic form.[43]

Medusa also appears as a primitive form of Artemis.

The archetype of the Underworld Goddess begins to emerge more clearly as these interconnections between Medusa, the Melanesian goddess, Persephone, the Minoan Serpent Goddess, and Artemis/Hecate are seen. The powerful Queen of the Underworld, whose very gaze paralyzes patriarchal men with fear, is related to both death and fertility. For the wisdom of the sacrificed Kore maiden is that in death is fertilization and new birth. The primal feminine experience of life as growth through the transformation of death and rebirth is expressed in the Eleusinian Mysteries, in the Melanesian myths of the sacrificial maiden, in Medusa's blood which gives both life and death, and in Hecate's revelatory visions which are seen in the dark madness of the night. It is expressed in the Great Mother (elementary character) who gives birth to a younger form of herself as Kore (transformative character) who is the

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[42]Campbell, Occidental Mythology, p. 154.

[43]Kerenyi, p. 127.

death goddess. Life gives birth to death which is contained within the Great Round as part of the eternal process of rebirth, as matter (prakṛti) is born in one form only to die while the divine energy (śakti) remains unending.

Additional Symbols of the Goddess

There are a few additional symbols of the Goddess which must be briefly described, as they will appear in the Christian view. These may be delineated as qualities of the Life Mother and the Death Mother. As Life Mother, the feminine is seen as the vessel or womb which is continually giving birth to the universe, the positive elementary. Also, the feminine is seen as the moon wisdom which gives illumination, the positive transformative. As Death Mother, the feminine is seen as nature, matter, the earth, body, and tomb, the negative elementary. And she is also seen as night, the unconscious, creator of illusion and delusion, the negative transformative.

In the beginning of this chapter the vessel symbolism has been mentioned in relationship to the symbol of the One Goddess with Many Names who is the origin of all phenomena, the Great Round. Now it may be seen that, as elemental container and as transformative kiln, the central symbol of the feminine is the vessel.

> . . . From the very beginning down to the latest stages of development we find this archetypal symbol as essence of the feminine. The basic symbolic equation woman=body=vessel corresponds to what is perhaps mankind's--man's as well as woman's--most elementary experience

of the Feminine.[44]

Woman is the life-vessel as such, in which life forms, which bears all living things, and which discharges them into the world. Woman as vessel bears her child "within" her. Sexually the male enters "into" her. This sense of interiority, of the "within," characterizes all aspects of the feminine, the inner space wherein all creativity occurs inside the vessel-body. As Jung says:

> Finally, it should be remarked that emptiness is a great feminine secret. It is something absolutely alien to man; the chasm, the unplumbed depths, the yin.[45]

It is men's terror and their fascination.

> If we survey the whole of the symbolic sphere determined by the vessel character of the Archetypal Feminine, we find that in its elementary and transformative character the Feminine as 'creative principle' encompasses the whole world. This is the totality of nature in its original unity, from which all life arises and unfolds, assuming, in its highest transformation, the form of the spirit.[46]

In this symbol of the vessel, that which men have feared, desecrated, and devalued can be seen. For within the vessel it is dark, empty, and unknown. Instincts arise from within the body and frighten the child aspect of the psyche. The burgeoning ego seeks to rise out of the darkness, "above"

44Erich Neumann, The Great Mother, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 39.

45Carl Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Collected Works, Vol. 9, i (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 98.

46Neumann, Great Mother, p. 62.

the body. But this does not dissipate the power of the body-vessel.

> . . . Everything that issues from the darkness within its vessel is looked upon as its offspring and child, and the domination of the Archetypal Feminine over all this constellates the unity and fateful power of the matriarchal world.[47]

With the rise of patriarchal consciousness the power of the vessel symbol had to be broken, for it seemed to encompass and overwhelm the emerging ego consciousness. There arise, then, myths of the shining solar hero who combats the maternal uroboros, now seen as the dragon, chaos, e.g., Jahweh fights Leviathan, Zeus fights Typhon, Indra fights Vritra. And the vessel is devalued as a mere receptacle of the male seed. But this is not the way it was conceived of during the thousands of years before patriarchy.

> . . . In the matriarchal world the woman as vessel is not made by man or out of man or used for his procreative purposes; rather, the reverse is true: it is this vessel with its mysterious creative character that brings forth the male in itself and from out of itself.[48]

Here it is true that the male opens the ground so that the seed may be sown, but it is earth seed, born of the earth. The Great Vessel engenders its own seed, which is born, transformed, and dies, only to be born again.

The vessel symbolism of the archetype was expressed from very early times in pottery and the making of pots, a task reserved for women.

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[47]Neumann, p. 48. [48]Neumann, p. 62.

> . . . In Grotto Scaloria, in the Gargan's Peninsula of southern Italy, a beautiful painted pot dating from about 6000 B. C. was standing by a stalagmite.[49]

This conjunction of pillar and pot is reminiscent of the lingam and yoni symbolism from the Neolithic Indus Valley culture. In some areas the stalagmite, pillar, or tree symbolism develops into the idea of the Mother as the Great World Tree which shelters, protects, and nourishes the vegetative, animal, and human realms as a womb. In the early Neolithic era in Old Europe many inscribed miniature vessels were found as votive offerings to the Goddess, 368 in the Vinča excavations alone.[50]

> . . . In the Sardinian, as in older eastern Mediterranean cults, particularly the Trojan, pottery undoubtedly played a part in the cult of the Great Goddess. In the imagination of primitive man a squat, bulky jar must have represented the very essence of the feminine. Receiving, preserving, and dispensing nourishment, it became the emblem of woman, the vessel in which life is formed and from which it emerges; it also symbolized woman as the dispenser of milk.[51]

In early Vedic symbolism the Goddess is referred to as Aditī, Infinite Mother, Mahī Mātā, the Great Mother, Parameshṭhī, the primeval source of the undifferentiated cosmos, Virāj, the Cosmic, and Mahat, the Universal. She is the Mother, the infinite womb, the substratum and creator of the entire universe. As vessel-womb, she is a metaphysical symbol:

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[49]Gimbutas, p. 79. [50]Gimbutas, p. 86.

[51]Sibylle von Cles-Reden, The Realm of the Great Goddess (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962), pp. 141-42.

> . . . the arch personification of the power of Space, Time, and Matter, within whose bound all beings arise and die: the substance of their bodies, configurator of their lives and thoughts, and receiver of their dead. And everything having form or name--including God personified as good or evil, merciful or wrathful--was her child, within her womb.[52]

This vision of the vessel-womb is the positive elementary type of the feminine, seeing birth as the source from which life, growth, and replenishment spring in inexhaustible plenty.

A second major symbol of the Life Mother is the moon and the transformative wisdom it gives. Even the goddesses associated with the dark aspect of the moon, e.g., Hecate, Cybele, Circe, etc., are revered as givers of prophecy, inspiration, and illumination. Part of the wisdom of the moon is that it is always changing as the moon changes in its monthly cycle. Through the analogy of woman's womb, which grows and shrinks with the moon, as well as woman's monthly menstrual cycle, the feminine is connected with inspiration and receptivity to divine revelation. The rhythmic change of the moon leads to expression in music and dance as ritual worship of the Moon Goddess. This leads to the development of the arts, e.g., pottery, weaving, cordage, etc., which were all originally woman's domain. The Indian Goddess Sarasvatī, who loves beauty and the arts, as well as the Goddess Lakshmī, who gives success, wealth, and prosperity, are examples of this positive transformative character of the feminine. From Neolithic

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[52]Campbell, Occidental Mythology, p. 7.

times woman has also been connected through the moon with the plant world and, having knowledge of herbs, was both physical and psychic healer.

The symbols of the crescent moon and horns have been shown from the Neolithic period to be related to the transformative goddess. She is seen also in the priestesses of the early cults, e.g., the mysteries which preceded the Eleusinian as well as the Delphic Oracle and Sibylline Oracle. In the Tantric tradition she is named Cit-Śakti, that divine energy which leads to illumination and consciousness. In the Gnostic tradition she is named Sophia, wisdom. Her wisdom is not a rational concept, but is seen by a reflective consciousness and is veiled, inward, and hidden. It is not absolute, but relative. Harding writes:

> The contradictory character of the Moon Goddess is thus resolved. For her good and evil aspects are seen to be not absolute but relative. Her power works evil under certain circumstances but good under others. To men whose nature is in opposition to her cyclic character she is apt to be particularly dangerous. To women who have within them this same peculiar quality which the Moon Goddess epitomizes, the power she wields is far less likely to be destructive and indeed if the woman is in a right relation to this principle of her own nature, the goddess blesses her with fertility and with magic power.[53]

The connection of the feminine with earth, matter, and the body is evident from the earliest Paleolithic images which show the naked female form as a source and manifestation of divine energy in itself. In the Neolithic era this aspect

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53Harding, p. 137.

becomes deeply identified with the earth, for women were seen as direct expressions of the power and fertility of the earth. Earth and vegetation symbolism predominates in this early stage when ego consciousness is undeveloped and embedded in nature and the world, and agriculture is the mainstay of society.

> At this stage, food symbolism and organs co-ordinated with it are of prime importance. This explains why Mother Goddess cultures and their mythologies are closely connected with fertility and growth, and particularly with agriculture, hence with the sphere of food, which is the material and bodily sphere.[54]

The image of the Mother Goddess suckling her divine child becomes predominant, e.g., as a goat she suckles the baby Zeus, protecting him from his devouring father Chronos, as Isis she suckles the baby Horus back to life when he is bitten by a scorpion, as Mary she suckles and protects the child Jesus from Herod.

From the patriarchal perspective, however, this sustaining and nourishing aspect of the feminine is counterbalanced by the transient nature of matter, i.e., everything born of the body dies. In Sāṁkhyam philosophy the concept of prakṛti or matter is feminine, but it is inconscient matter constantly changing form and arrangement, while consciousness is identified as puruṣa and is masculine. Bachofen, in attempting to bring the early period of matriarchy to the light, does not avoid the patriarchal devaluation of matter, asserting that the maternal relationship is only material while the paternal

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[54]Neumann, Origins, p. 43.

relationship is "higher," and spiritual:

> The mother's connection with the child is based on a maternal relation, it is accessible to sense perception and remains always a natural truth. But the father as begetter presents an entirely different aspect. Standing in no visible relationship to the child, he can never, even in the marital relation, cast off a certain fictive character. Belonging to the offspring only through the mediation of the mother, he always appears as the remoter potency. As promoting cause, he discloses an immateriality over against which the sheltering and nourishing mother appears as . . . matter.[55]

The feminine is related to matter and to death, as seen in the multitude of feminine images found in tombs, but this is not negative when seen as part of the Great Round. But when the Great Goddess is dethroned and subordinated by the new patriarchal gods as Hera is, then she becomes angry, jealous, and bitter, and the old earth values are seen as permanent, fixed, and heavy. This pattern may be seen quite clearly in the figure of Pandora. Harrison identifies Pandora or Anesidora, "She who sends up gifts," with the earth Kore, citing many vases which picture her rising from the earth.[56] As Earth Kore, she is the Mother of life, but:

> . . . Zeus the Father will have no great Earth-goddess, Mother and Maid in one, in his man-fashioned Olympus, but her figure is from the beginning, so he re-makes it; woman, who was the inspirer, becomes the temptress; she who made all things, gods and mortals alike, is become their plaything, their slave, dowered only with physical beauty, and with a slave's

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[55]J. J. Bachofen, Myth, Religion and Mother Right, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 109.

[56]Harrison, pp. 280-85.

> tricks and blandishments. To Zeus, the arch-patriarchal bourgeois, the birth of the first woman is but a huge Olympian jest.[57]

So, when she who was the Mother of Life opens her chest, her grave-pithos, only death and disease come forth, with a glimmer of hope at the bottom. When the earth body is rejected she brings forth negativity, even as a stomach which is knotted with tension and ill-fed for years develops ulcers. She is the negative elementary feminine, Mother of Death.

The fourth symbol of the Goddess as night, darkness, and the unconscious is expressed in every mythology in which the source of life emerges or is created from primordial darkness. Psychologically this means that the unconscious is the mother/source of all things:

> . . . The uroboric goddess of the beginning is the Great Goddess of the Night, although she is seldom worshipped directly as such.[58]

The Neolithic myth of the great black bird Nyx, Night, who laid the cosmic egg of the universe expresses this theme, as does the Babylonian Tiamat. The image of the Goddess Rātri, Night, whose sister is Uṣas, the Dawn, is revered in the Vedas, and elaborated in the Devī-Māhātmyam as Kālarātri, the dark night of periodic dissolution, as Mahārātri, the great night of final dissolution, and as Moharātri, the terrible night of delusion. Rātri, as the dark goddess, is related to Kālī, the

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[57]Harrison, p. 285.

[58]Neumann, Great Mother, p. 212.

black goddess who destroys all phenomena by dissolving them back into herself. Worship of Rātri and Kālī, as well as of Demeter-Kore (the Eleusinian mysteries culminated on the night of the full moon), and the witch Diana, was held at night. As Yoganidra, in the Devī-Māhātmyam, she makes even Vishṇu, the sustainer of life, sleep. She is also Mahāmāyā, the cause of delusion and infatuation, deluding the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha and her devotees, King Suratha and Samadhi. Indeed, it is her function as Māyā Śakti in the Tantric conception to negate, limit, and delude, for it is only through negation and limitation that form can be created out of the formless. Within the Tantric world-view, then, this negative transformative aspect of the feminine is seen as necessary to the existence of a universe of form. But to the patriarchs the darkness was a source of fear which must be overcome as the sun conquered the darkness every morning. And their fear strengthened the delusion of the solely evil nature of darkness, rendering her more frightening than before. For when she is repressed through fear, the dance of the polar opposites of existence cannot be seen as playful illusion, but only as entrapping, deluding trickery.

Chapter 8

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE FEMININE

The Judeo-Christian tradition is a patriarchal tradition and shares with other patriarchies certain assumptions about the essential nature and function of women and of the feminine. It has been necessary to examine, in some detail, the archetype of the feminine in other religious traditions, theologies, and mythologies in order to gain a more complete picture, for this is not available within the Judeo-Christian framework. The pervasive nature of this patriarchal perspective, or bias, can be clearly seen in Malinowski's discussion of the difficulty of teaching Christianity to matriarchal aborigines whose true kinsmen are not fathers and sons but mother's brothers.

> . . . We must realize that the cardinal dogma of God the Father and God the Son, the sacrifice of the only Son and the filial love of man to his Maker would completely miss fire in a matrilineal society where the relation between father and son is decreed by tribal law to be that of two strangers, where all personal unity between them is denied, and where all family obligations are associated with mother-line. We cannot wonder that Paternity must be among the principal truths to be inculcated by proselytizing Christians. Otherwise the dogma of the Trinity would have to be translated into matrilineal terms, and we should have to speak of a God-kadala (mother's brother),

a God-sister's son, and a divine baloma (spirit).[1]

Within the general bias of the patriarchal view, which pervades all "civilization" that has developed from the Near Eastern cultural matrix, there is some variation. In Greece, with Odysseus and Circe, for example, and in India with Śiva and Śakti, dialogue occurred between patriarchal and matriarchal thought. But in the Judeo-Christian Biblical tradition the feminine was suppressed as much as possible and dialogue forbidden. Zeus marries or has affairs with the goddesses he meets in the lands he invades. Yahweh condemns the goddesses, burns her images, and kills her officiating priests (II Kings 23:20).[2] The Hebrew religious cult is limited to men alone, circumcision being the sign of membership; and women were not even allowed to worship in the Temple. For women were unclean on account of their reproductive functions, i.e., menstruation and childbirth. But then, there is little that is clean to Yahweh, as it is said in the Book of Job:

> . . . How can he who is born of woman be clean?
> Behold, even the moon is not bright and the stars
> are not clean in his sight. (Job 25:4-5)

It is necessary to delimit and define the meaning of Judeo-Christian in this context. Does Judeo-Christian refer

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[1] Bronislaw Malinowski, The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929), pp. 186-87.

[2] All following Biblical quotations are from The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952).

to the scriptural tradition as recorded in canonical scripture? What, then, about the so-called apocryphal or hidden scriptures, some of which are included in the Vulgate, the Roman Catholic Bible, but omitted from the Protestant Bible? Does "Christian" refer to the teachings of Jesus, or to the letters of Paul, or to the pastoral epistles which set the organization of the early Church, or to the teachings of the early Church Fathers, which are the basis of Christian theology, or to the systematized theological world view of medieval Catholicism? The intention here is not to limit the meaning of Judeo-Christian to any one of these sources and thus to investigate one to the exclusion of the others. This has been done, for example, by Winsome Munro in his article "Patriarchy and Charismatic Community in 'Paul',"[3] in which he isolates the themes of "genuine" Pauline material by distinguishing them from trito-Pauline or Pastoral material which is clearly sexist, ascribing to women a secondary and derivative humanity. Genuine Pauline material is reflected in Paul's statement that:

> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

In this way it can be asserted that the "real" Paul was not

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[3]Winsome Munro, "Patriarchy and Charismatic Community in 'Paul'," Women and Religion: 1972, ed. Judith P. Goldenberg (Missoula, Montana: American Academy of Religion, 1973), pp. 149-58.

a sexist, or that "Jesus was a Feminist";[4] or one can work on "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretations," as Phyllis Trible[5] does. This will presumably enable the modern reader to see what has, for these two thousand years, remained "as a given in Christian tradition, awaiting full appropriation."[6] This reexamination of specific aspects of Christianity with the hope of appropriating them from their patriarchal bias ignores the fact that even if Paul or Jesus or even Yahweh himself were not sexist, the institution and world-view which has dominated Western culture is. Mary Daly raises this question most directly:

> . . . What sense does it make to assert that in Christ 'there is neither male nor female'? Wasn't 'Christ' an exclusively male symbol, even though somewhat 'feminized'?[7]

When the attempt is made to purify the "original" Christian teaching from its "misinterpretations," the underlying assumption is that the "original" message of Yahweh is transsexual and aimed toward the liberation of all persons. But when it is recognized that "Christ" is himself a male symbol, the male Messiah to a male religious cult which worshipped a transsexual

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[4]Leonard Swidler, Jesus Was a Feminist (New York: Church Women United, n.d.).

[5]Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," Journal of the American Academy of Religion, XLI/1 (March, 1973), pp. 30-48.

[6]Munro, p. 158.

[7]Mary Daly, The Church and the Second Sex, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Colophon, 1975), p. 22.

deity who is always addressed as "He," then it becomes clear that the Judeo-Christian tradition is, in its very essence, a patriarchal religion established by a deliberate and aggressive suppression of the matriarchal cults surrounding it. The intent here is to look at the archetypal images or symbols of the Feminine which arise consciously and unconsciously from the Judeo-Christian tradition considered as a whole. Judeo-Christian, then, is to be understood in a general and inclusive way.

There is a naive Christian assumption that the sexual imagery of patriarchal culture infallibly corresponds to "nature" and to God's will. The record of Christianity in regard to women and the feminine principle is a record of contradictions. It is interesting to note that contradiction is an anima function, as one function of Śakti is to limit, in order to create form in the formless. It may be that the repressed anima of Christianity is perceived by animus rationality as simply contradictory. Hillman describes the way in which heroic or ego consciousness faces the "contradictory" anima as a moral dilemma, i.e., the ego thinks that it must choose between apparently opposing poles, but this is a creation of the ego, not essential to the nature of the anima:

> . . . The entire operation of literal choice between spirit and body, inner and outer, positive and negative has its source in 'ego consciousness' which maintains itself best through giving reality to these fantasies, forcing opposition between them, suppressing one, and then

calling this game: choice.[8]

The Christian ego sees a conflict in the concept of the feminine between women as persons made in the image of God and women as inferior, derivative beings, both concepts being supported in the Bible. Is this choice an anima problem or an ego problem? Jung argues that choice, which implies discrimination, is essential to the development of consciousness:

> There is no consciousness without discrimination of opposites. This is the paternal principle, the Logos, which eternally struggles to extricate itself from the primal warmth and primal darkness of the maternal womb; in a word, from unconsciousness.[9]

Unconsciousness, then, is the primal sin to the Logos; and matricide is the Logos' first act of liberation, but the Logos must pay the price of this separation of opposites, for:

> . . . Nothing can exist without its opposite; the two were one in the beginning and will be one again in the end. Consciousness can only exist through continual recognition of the unconscious, just as everything that lives must pass through many deaths.[10]

The Judeo-Christian tradition, with its emphasis on consciousness, e.g., Christ is identified as the incarnate Logos, finds its height and downfall in this principle. For where the feminine is concerned, and this may be seen as axiomatic for the

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[8] James Hillman, "Anima" (II) Spring 1974 (New York: Spring Publications, 1974), p. 120.

[9] Carl G. Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Collected Works, Vol. 9, i (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 96.

[10] Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, p. 96.

whole tradition, Judeo-Christianity discriminates and commits matricide without recognition of its dependence on its feminine polarity. It gets stuck at the level of heroic ego consciousness, separating and "choosing" between masculine and feminine, spirit and body, inner and outer, and ultimately good and evil.

The power on women of the almost exclusive symbolization of divinity as male is described by Simone de Beauvoir:

> . . . On her knees, breathing the odor of incense, the young girl abandons herself to the gaze of God and the angels: a masculine gaze.[11]

The tendency to equate the male sex with the divine is enforced when all the ministers, rabbis, or priests of the Church or Synagogue are male. The corollary of this is that women have an irremediably inferior nature which excludes them from active participation in religion. St. Bonaventura affirms this by saying that since Christ is male his priests must be male. He is not alone. St. Augustine argues that the male alone, or the union of male and female, represent the full image of God, but not the female alone. Indeed, Augustine identifies maleness with monism and femaleness, then, with the fallen state of existence. Gregory of Nyssa disagrees with him, identifying the neuter state with monism and bisexuality with fallen existence. But Augustine's voice is dominant, and is echoed by Tertullian's radical abasement of woman and insistence on her shameful female

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[11]Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1953), p. 290.

nature; while Clement of Alexandria states that women should blush when they think of their nature.[12]

In patristic theology, which all of these men express, there is a dualistic psychology, which is the basis of the patristic doctrine of man, combining a hatred of sex and women and also a veneration of virgins and, by the fourth century A. D., of Mary. Woman's nature is identified with the body or flesh, which must be subject to spirit (the two having been heroically separated) in the right ordering of nature, even as woman must be subject to man.

> This assimilation of male-female dualism into a soul-body dualism in patristic theology conditions basically the definition of woman, both in terms of her subordination to the male in the order of nature and her 'carnality' in the disorder of sin.[13]

The pervasive misogynism of Christian theology, which has been briefly discussed here, may be seen to stem from various sources. The first source is the Hebrew tradition's idea of woman's special sinfulness, exemplified in Eve, and her ritual uncleanliness. The second is the dualistic anthropology of the New Testament and patristic theology, which opposes flesh and spirit, identifying them with female and male, respectively. The third is the androcentric biology of Aristotle, which was incorporated into official Catholic theology by

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[12]Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church," Religion and Sexism, ed. Rosemary R. Ruether (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), p. 157.

[13]Ruether, p. 156.

Thomas Acquinas. Acquinas supports the Aristotelian idea of fixed natures, arguing that the nature of the male is intellectual activity, while the female is created solely with respect to her sexuality, i.e., her reproductive bodily apparatus. He considered the birth of a girl child to be the result of an accident to the sperm, which otherwise would have produced an image of its male originator. Thus, a girl child is a defective human being, by her nature. The fourth source is the ascetic tradition's fear of the female as the source and instigator of sexual feelings and therefore of sin.

> . . . The continual theme of this monastic literature is the woman as danger, as source of discord, as continual threat to peace and quiet and the contemplative life (all women talk too much), and above all as persons whose values are perverse. . . . It would seem that the ascetic tradition requires this devaluation of the female, perceived to embody all that is inimical to the celibate religious life.[14]

A psychological understanding of this issue would suggest that the monks feared sexuality, perhaps homosexuality, and projected this onto women. Within the Christian tradition, however, it was understood as a theological issue concerning the inherent lascivious nature of the feminine.

The intent of this chapter is not to document the history of Judeo-Christian misogynism, which has already been done by Mary Daly in The Church and the Second Sex, and in a collection of scholarly essays edited by Rosemary Ruether, Religion

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[14]Eleanor Commo McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Woman in Medieval Theology," Ruether, pp. 252-53.

and Sexism. As has been stated, the intent is not to investigate some particular aspect of Christian thought and "reappropriate" its non-sexist interpretation for modern sensibilities, for this both ignores the pervasive misogynist flavor of the tradition, which has created untold suffering for people throughout its history, and assumes some "original" or "essential" Christian message which is not patriarchal. The intent here is to look at the archetypal symbols or images of the feminine which have emerged, both consciously and unconsciously, from the Judeo-Christian tradition considered as a whole. For this purpose, a brief description of the overall misogyny of the Christian tradition has been given; and the primary quality of patriarchal consciousness, i.e., the separation of opposites, has been mentioned. It is this patriarchal separation of opposites which characterizes the Christian view of the feminine.

Carl Jung describes the development from an undifferentiated concept of deity, in which positive and negative moral factors are united in the "primitive mind," to a concept of deity in which opposites are separated.

> . . . The clearest expression of this is the Christian reformation of the Jewish concept of the Deity: the morally ambiguous Yahweh became an exclusively good God, while everything evil was united in the devil. It seems as if the development of the feeling function in Western man forced a choice on him which led to the moral splitting of the divinity into two halves. In the East the predominantly intuitive intellectual attitude left no room for feeling values, and the gods--Kali is a case in point--could retain their original paradoxical morality undisturbed. Thus Kali is representative of the East and the Madonna

> of the West. The latter has entirely lost the shadow that still distantly followed her in the allegories of the Middle Ages.[15]

As the deity in Christianity is split into a totally good God and a totally evil devil, the feminine is split into a totally good woman, represented in Mary, and a totally evil woman, represented in Eve. And as the good was focused on God in heaven, while evil became localized in people, Mary has slowly been assumed, over the years, into heaven and Eve has been identified with actual human women. This is directly expressed by Tertullian, who preached to women:

> . . . Do you not know that you are Eve . . . You are the Devil's gateway. You are the unsealer of that forbidden tree. You are the first deserter of the divine Law. You are she who persuaded him whom the Devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert, that is death, even the Son of God had to die.[16]

The unity of good and evil aspects which a woman experiences in herself, and which have been expressed as the double-aspected Goddess of Life and Death, is denied by patriarchal consciousness, which seeks only the good and represses or denies evil.

> The conception of the archetypal feminine as a unity is one of woman's fundamental experiences. The ancient pantheon with its antithetical goddesses still represented this conception, but in the patriarchal world it was dissolved. In the patriarchate the split into the Good and the Bad Mother caused the negative side of the feminine to

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[15]Jung, p. 103.

[16]Tertullian, De Cultu Fem. 1,1., cited by Ruether, p. 157.

> be thrust back very largely into the unconscious. And moreover, precisely because this splitting-off of a 'bad' from a 'good' feminine archetype was only partially successful, the goddess was entirely banished from heaven, as in the patriarchal monotheistic religions.[17]

It is, then, the Good and the Bad Mother which will be examined here in the figures of Mary and Eve.

Eve, Bringer of Sin Into the World

Eve is the feminine figure of Genesis 2-3, who leads Adam out of the timeless Garden of Eden into the land of time, death, and procreation. She functions as the gate into mortality, the world of time and history, birth and death. This entrance is effected by a single deed--eating the fruit of the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil, which ends the paradisical age and begins the cursed world of death, work, and sexuality. This theme is very similar to the mythologem of the serpent and maiden seen in the Melanesian myths of Hainuwele, Rabia, Hina, and Te Tuna, as well as in the archaic Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone.[18] And in the Eden story of Genesis 2:4b-3:24, two of the main characters are a maiden, Eve, and a serpent. Clearly, these myths are related, all expressing the mythologem of the reciprocities of death and life; all telling the way in which death entered the world. This suggests that a brief investigation of the background of the

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[17]Erich Neumann, Amor and Psyche, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 129.

[18]See above, ch. 4, pp. 82-89.

Genesis creation myths will aid in understanding the figure of Eve in the Garden.

Joseph Campbell delineates four stages or types of creation stories: those in which the world is born of the goddess without consort; those in which the world is born of the goddess fecundated by a consort; those in which the world is made from the body of the goddess by a male warrior-god; and those in which the world is created by the unaided power of the male god alone.[19] An example of the first stage is the Neolithic bird goddess Nyx, who lays the cosmic egg; the second stage is the Maori Rangi and Papa, or the Egyptian Nut and Geb; the third stage is the Aztec goddess Tlalteutli, or the Babylonian goddess Tiamat; and the fourth stage is Elohim in Genesis 1 and Yahweh in Genesis 2-3.

There are many parallels between the Babylonian creation stories of Tiamat and Marduk, composed about the sixteenth century B.C., and the story of Genesis 1, said by scholars to have derived from the Priestly source of about the fourth century B.C., not the least of which is the similar ordering activity which Marduk and Yahweh both perform in the creation of the world, e.g., setting the planets in their orbits, the stars in the heaven, etc. Marduk expresses the third stage of creation myth by fighting the great mother of the gods Tiamat, who is angry at her children who have killed her consort. The gods

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[19]Joseph Campbell, Masks of God: Occidental Mythology (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p. 86.

enlist Marduk to defeat Tiamat, which he does in exchange for the position of leadership of the gods. At this stage the previously good Mother, who gives birth to the gods, is seen by the aspiring heroic ego-consciousness of the gods as the Terrible, devouring Mother. Marduk, the symbol of rising patriarchal consciousness, defeats Tiamat, seen as chaos and the great dragon, and creates the world by severing her body, forming the earth from half and the sky from half. Without recognition from Marduk and his friends, Tiamat remains the Great Round, for the world is created inside and out of her body. This is to say, the Great Goddess remains "she who fashions all things"; and Marduk serves as her agent in causing to come to pass what was already coming to pass. But the god's and the patriarchy's lack of recognition and valuing of her cause them to see her as a dangerous and fierce demoness. Campbell comments:

> . . . And we are going to find, throughout the following history of the orthodox patriarchal systems of the West, that the power of this goddess-mother of the world, whom we have here seen defamed, abused, insulted, and overthrown by her sons, is to remain as an ever-present threat to their castle of reason, which is founded upon a soil that they consider to be dead but is actually alive, breathing, and threatening to shift.[20]

Scholars have noted that the Babylonian name 'ti'amat' is etymologically related to the Hebrew term 'tehom,' the 'deep' of Genesis 1:2, ". . . darkness was upon the face of

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[20] Campbell, p. 86.

the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters." There is little doubt that the imagery of both the creation stories of the Biblical Genesis and the Babylonian Genesis derive from a general fund of Sumero-Semetic myth; but the Biblical perspective represents a later stage of patriarchal development, the fourth stage of creation myth, when the power of the original Great Goddess is reduced to its elemental state, tehom, and the male god is said to create alone, without the help of the Goddess, out of the void. Void clearly denies the power and presence of matter (prakṛti of the Indian Sāṁkhya system) which is feminine. So the Priestly creation occurs by the Word, a masculine animus quality, alone. Earlier elements of Bronze Age matriarchal mythology are rearranged and "patriarchally inverted," as Campbell describes. This seems to have been done in the case of Genesis 1 by the fourth century Priestly editors, who compiled and re-edited the various sagas, legends, geneologies, law codes, and historical fragments of the Pentateuch.

The second Genesis creation myth, Genesis 2:4b-3:24, stems from the mythology of the southern kingdom, Judah, in the ninth century, and is known as the Yahwist Text because it uses the name Yahweh, "Lord," in referring to the Creator. These two stories describe different models of creation, though these differences have been overlooked or strangely mixed until the advent of modern Biblical source criticism in the nineteenth century. The Priestly creation story describes the creation of the universe as a whole, consisting of an ordering

of chaos into cosmos, built on the separation of the fathomless waters (Genesis 1:6-8), with human beings as the culminating pinnacle of all creation, and a seemingly equal creation, "male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27), by a possibly androgenous but certainly plural deity, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). The Yahwist creation story describes the origin of life on earth, in a desert area without rain, much less the "waters," with the creation of the mysterious human, '<u>adham</u>, after the plants, i.e., the Garden, and before the animals, and the creation of woman out of man as the final creation. It is only in the Yahwist Text that the images of the Garden of Eden, the woman Eve, the serpent, the two forbidden trees, and Yahweh's curses occur.

A comparison of the two accounts of the creation of human beings will make the differences between the two accounts clear. The basis for Christian doctrines of woman's inferiority and evil nature has been found in these creation accounts. The word used to designate deity in the Priestly account is 'Elohim,' the plural form of the most commonly used Hebrew term for deity, 'El,' and may refer to a male or female god or gods. The main goddess of the Sidonians was Elath, who was also called Elohim. She is the same as the Canaanite Asherah, and her symbol, a schematized tree, stood beside the altar of Yahweh in certain periods and was in the Temple at the time of Solomon, about the tenth century B. C. 'Elohim' may have been understood by people as including El and Elath. This would

explain the apparently androgenous creation expressed in Genesis 1:27, "So Elohim created man in his image, in the image of Elohim he created them; male and female he created them." The "image" described here is both male and female, which accords with the plural usage in Genesis 1:26, ". . . let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Campbell comments:

> . . . if, when made in the image of Elohim, Adam and Eve appeared together, then Elohim must have been not male alone but androgyne, beyond duality--in which case, why should the godhead not be worshipped as properly in a female as in a masculine form?[21]

But this is a question which did not arise, or was not taken seriously, in the patriarchal Judeo-Christian tradition of the last three thousand years. Attention was primarily focused on the Yahwist account of woman's creation from Adam's rib.

In Genesis 2:7, Yahweh creates a human being, '*adham* from the dust of the earth and breathes life into this being. The earth here is a hidden feminine symbol, for it still is the substance out of which life is created. This is reflected in Genesis 3:19, "from dust you came to dust you will return," a reference to the Goddess as Great Round; all phenomena are born out of her and return to her. The term '*adham* is a generic term for mankind, male and female, in Hebrew. So a textually sound interpretation cannot identify this generic '*adham* with the sexual terms '*îš*, man, and '*iššāh*, woman, which occur

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[21]Campbell, p. 112.

in Genesis 2:23. The account of Genesis 2:21-23 may be more properly termed the creation of sexuality rather than the creation of woman, if the generic aspect of '<u>adham</u> is considered. '<u>Adham</u> is, then, an androgenous being which is separated into its two polarities, man and woman. There can be no question, then, of superiority of sex based on order of creation. However, the Church Fathers, who formed Christian orthodoxy, saw this account as the creation of woman out of man.

> . . . The subordination and inferiority of Eve--and therefore of all womankind--to the male are thus established before the Fall in the order of God's original creation: first, by reason of the primacy of Adam's creation, who was not only first in time and the founder of the human race but also the material source of the first woman; and second, by reason of finality, for Adam displays the peculiar end and essence of human nature, intellectual activity, whereas Eve's finality is purely auxiliary and summed up in her bodily, generative function.[22]

In attempting to "reappropriate" the Yahwist creation story from patriarchal interpretation, Trible points out that in Hebrew poetry the last item of a series is the most worthy, as in the crowning creation of human beings in the Priestly creation, suggesting that woman is the crown of creation, not an inferior product.

It also seems clear that the story of Eve being born from Adam is a myth of male birth, similar to Athene's birth from Zeus. In the natural world it is quite obvious that men

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[22]McLaughlin, pp. 217-18.

are born of women. In order for patriarchy to succeed, this overwhelming power of women must be broken, and this is done in the reversed myth of male birth. This antinatural symbolism of patriarchal consciousness contradicts the natural character of the symbols as they originate from the unconscious, as it distorts and perverts them.

> . . . Unnatural symbols and hostility of the natural symbol--e.g., Eve taken out of Adam--are characteristic of the patriarchal spirit.[23]

But it fails because the matriarchal character of natural symbols asserts itself again and again, bringing confusion and ambivalence to the rational mind.

A second argument for woman's inferiority is found in Genesis 2:18, where Yahweh declares that he will make a "helper fit" for '_adham_. Woman, seen as only a helper to man, is inferior. But the Hebrew word for helper, '_ezer_, is used to describe God's quality of being a helper for man, hardly denoting inferiority. '_Ezer_ is simply a relational term, not implying superiority or inferiority. Trible concludes:

> . . . God is the helper superior to man; the animals are helpers inferior to man; woman is the helper equal to man.[24]

A third argument for woman's inferiority is found in Genesis 2:23, pointing to the man's naming of the woman as sign of his dominion over her. But the usual Hebrew term for

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[23]Erich Neumann, _The Great Mother_, Ralph Manheim, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 50.

[24]Trible, p. 36.

"naming" is the word qara', "to call," with the noun for "name," i.e., to call the name of an object, as is seen in Genesis 4:17, 25, 26. Genesis 2:23 uses qara' alone, which implies recognition, not naming. 'Adham recognizes their sexual polarity, calling her woman 'iššāh, and himself now man, 'îš. After the Fall, Adam names her Eve.

Feminine inferiority was given Biblical sanction by the Church Fathers' interpretation of these passages, but the evil of the feminine nature was seen in Eve's relationship to the serpent and her role in the Fall. The image of a feminine figure in a beautiful paradisical garden with a tree of knowledge and immortality was not strange to the Near East. In Sumerian mythology, the bountiful mythic garden with the magical tree, whose fruits gave both enlightenment and immortal life, was ruled by the great goddess Gula-Bau, an earlier counterpart of Demeter and Persephone. There is no guilt, sin, or withholding in this garden, for Gula-Bau gives the fruit to any mortal, male or female, who reaches for it with the proper will and readiness to receive. The tree is uroboric, springing from the feminine earth and with the phallic serpent pictured in its branches. In the patriarchal garden of Eden, however, the one tree has become two; the polarity of knowledge and immortality has been separated by Yahweh. Western patriarchy rejected, and fears to comprehend, this idea that the two trees are one and accessible. It would fundamentally threaten the distinction between Creator and created in Judeo-Christian thought if divinity were recognized as inherent in the

substance of the world, i.e., in the feminine. It does not please Yahweh that people have become "like one of us, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:22), so He expels them from the garden before they eat of the other tree and become immortal. In the Upaniṣads, the problem that arises when people become enlightened, and which Yahweh acts to prevent, is clearly expressed:

> Whoever thus knows, 'I am the Imperishable,' becomes this universal; and not even the gods can prevent him from becoming so, for he becomes thereby their very self. Hence, whoever worships another divinity thinking 'He is one, and I am another'--he knows not. He is like a sacrificial animal for the gods. But if even one animal is taken away, it is unpleasant. What, then, if many? And so it is not pleasing to the gods that men should know this.[25]

Yahweh is not pleased. Thomas Acquinas expresses this, unknowingly, when he states that the essential sin of both Adam and Eve is pride, their desire to be like God. The Good Mother of the Sumerian garden is replaced by Yahweh, who is jealous of his privileges and will not allow what she gave so freely. Gula-Bau becomes Eve, and the serpent Ningizzida, "Lord of the Tree of Truth,"[26] becomes Satan.

The serpent, "more subtle than any other wild creature" (Genesis 3:1), has a long history: from the Neolithic Serpent Goddess of Old Europe to the Melanesian myths of the maiden and serpent to the Akkadian and Sumerian Ningizzida of the third millennium B.C. to the Minoan Goddess of Doves and

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[25]Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.10. [26]Campbell, p. 9.

Serpents to the Greek Gorgon's head--though none of this is mentioned in the Yahwist text. The serpent is often related to the transformative knowledge, since it is connected with the moon and sloughing its skin, but the knowledge which it bears in the garden is evil to Yahweh. And the serpent is related to the feminine, both as a symbol of her knowledge of death and rebirth, of her power, e.g., kuṇḍalinī, and as her phallic and fecundating mate who gives sexuality and fertility, e.g., Hina and Te Tuna. Yahweh is even related to this serpent power, e.g., He turns Moses' rod into a serpent (Exodus 4:2-4); He sends serpents to bite the people in the wilderness and then tells Moses to make a bronze serpent image which will heal them (Numbers 21:5-9), and which they worshipped as Nehushtan (II Kings 18:4). It may be that the serpent power which gave the promise of renewed life and fertility was seen by the patriarchs as luring men away from true knowledge of God. In later Christian tradition the serpent is identified with Satan, the opponent of God; and it is through its connection with Eve that she is branded as the one who "brought sin into the world."

The question of feminine evil hinges on the question of why the serpent talked to the woman rather than the man. The text itself actually offers no answer, but male exegetes have found the reason in woman's reputedly wilder imagination, lack of rationality, weakness, and sexual promiscuity. Acquinas, expressing the quintessence of Catholic theology, argues that the serpent approached Eve because she was more credulous, easier to seduce, and capable of seducing her mate. Because of

her inferior reasoning abilities, he says, she believed she could actually equal God, while Adam never believed this. Adam, he says, ate because he hoped to attain knowledge of good and evil and because of his love for Eve. His loyalty to Eve diminishes the gravity of his sin, however his superior reasoning power makes him more responsible. In any case, all humanity did not fall until Adam fell; if he had resisted they would not have been expelled from the garden. Eve's role was, to Acquinas, instrumental but not decisive. She is not even considered capable of sinning successfully and independently. Her pride is more serious, however, because she believed the serpent.

Acquinas elaborates on the nature of the feminine in his discussion of the imago dei, which he says is found in both sexes but is better in the male. Female sexuality, identified as essential to woman's nature, means a weaker and more imperfect body than the male, which affects feminine intelligence and moral discernment. Woman is thus unequal physically, intellectually, and morally; and the source of this is the female body. Agreeing with Aristotle, Acquinas says that even in reproduction woman is subordinate and auxiliary; the male is the active and fecund agent and the female is merely the passive instrument.

Lest it be thought that Catholics alone have interpreted Eve in this way, Luther's position may be noted. He says that Eve's sins should be remembered without "insult of sex" for all people have vice; but the female sex is:

> . . . weaker, carrying about in mind and body several vices. But that one good, however, covers and conceals all of them: the womb and birth.[27]

To Luther, the feminine is redeemed from her vices when she carries out her one and only proper role, dictated by her body, i.e., childbearing. And John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, says that women are by nature:

> . . . weake, fraile, impacient, feble, and foolishe; and experience hath declared them to be unconstant, variable, cruell, and lacking the spirit of counsel and regiment.[28]

If, however, the text itself of Eve's conversation with the serpent is examined, it may be seen that Eve is intelligent and aggressive; she theologizes in reasoning about and interpreting God's command regarding the tree; and she acts independently without consulting Adam. This is all interpreted negatively in Christian tradition, as seen in the Ancren Riwle where nuns are exhorted to speak as little as possible, because if Eve had not spoken she would not have sinned. Eve sees with her own eyes that the tree is good for food, is aesthetically pleasing, and is a source of knowledge (Genesis 3:6). Having considered all these factors, perhaps motivated by her desire for wisdom, she eats. Adam eats without questioning or considering anything. It is simply stated, ". . . she also gave some to her husband and he ate." (Genesis 3:6) This act

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[27]Jane Dempsey Douglass, "Women and the Continental Reformation," Ruether, p. 297.

[28]Douglass, p. 301.

of eating, which has been seen as the cause of suffering and death, has also been recognized as the felix culpa, "happy sin," which opens the way for salvation, i.e., if the Fall had not occurred then Christ could not have brought salvation. In this context, Eve initiates the drama of salvation by breaking out of the status quo of timeless Paradise in the search for greater wisdom and consciousness. This initiation of the development of consciousness is precisely the role of the anima in masculine psyche. The Great Goddess, feminine symbol of the Self, has been reduced to an anima figure who is hated and feared for having brought the masculine psyche out of its timeless world of abstractions into the suffering world of relativity, time, birth, death, feeling, and relatedness. Man must enter this world before he can be saved, before the sacrificial death of Christ can redeem him, but he has despised and devalued she who brought him into the world.

The exact nature of what this original sin was also varies according to interpreter. Is the sin disobedience to Yahweh's order not to eat of the tree? Or is it the assertion of the human will to power, pride, the desire to be godlike? Or is it, as Harvey Cox suggests, the effect of not taking responsibility for one's actions?[29] For neither Adam nor Eve dies upon eating the apple as Yahweh had said in Genesis 2:17. They simply become conscious of their nakedness, that is, they

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[29] Harvey Cox, On Not Leaving It to the Snake, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1964).

perceive differences between each other which they had not noticed before. Their consciousness expands. And when Yahweh sees what they have done, He does not immediately punish them. Rather, He questions them. But each blames someone else for the deed. Adam blames Yahweh who gave him the woman, and Eve blames the serpent. It is only then that Yahweh curses and expels them. It may be that the forbidden deed was a test set before them, as this motif appears in many myths, which they failed by refusing responsibility for their actions.

The Christian tradition has interpreted this sin as basically sexual, though also involving disobedience and pride. Augustine's view was that sexual lust was the cause of the transmission of original sin. Medieval theologians said that concupiscence, the material element of the sin, was transmitted by sexual intercourse and therefore was never absent in anyone's life. Acquinas argues that marriage existed before the Fall, but the burning of sexual desire is a result of the Fall. People are conceived of as driven by an insatiable sexual urge. This is particularly true for women, for they are totally identified with the body. Yahweh's curses on women focus directly on her bodily definitions: she is cursed to pain in childbirth and to domination by her husband because of her "desire" (Genesis 3:16). It is after the cursing that Adam names the woman Eve, showing dominion over her by this naming. The name Eve means "the mother of all living"

(Genesis 3:20), a remnant of the Goddess' titles,[30] but it is used here as evidence of her subordination. The dominant interpretation of the Fall and original sin has led to a view of human life as expiation and reparation:

> This static, sin-haunted view of human life reflects and perpetuates a negative attitude toward sexuality, matter, and 'the world.'[31]

In short, a negative attitude is expressed toward the feminine, symbolized as Eve.

A picture of Eve from a fifteenth-century Swiss manuscript clearly expresses her symbolic value in orthodox Christianity. Her belly symbolizes life, the womb, for she is the "mother of all living," including the plant world, indicated by the grapes she holds before her belly-womb. But in the other hand she holds a skull and apple, symbolizing death.[32] She symbolizes sex, birth, and death, the feminine wisdom that birth and growth cannot occur without death, that life outside of Eden is a reciprocal process of growth and decay, which is perpetuated through sexuality. Like the Kore maidens, Persephone and Hainuwele, Eve teaches that in death is fertilization and new birth. But the patriarchy cannot allow this kind of feminine transformative wisdom. So Eve is seen as a

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[30]The Hindu expression 'jaya' is given to a wife because, through her, the husband is reborn as the son. Here there appears to be a reverential relationship between the wife and husband, for they effect perpetuation of each other's activity, including sexual activity.

[31]Daly, p. 186.

[32]Neumann, Great Mother, p. 253.

negative transformative type who leads men to disintegration and madness with her evil seductive charms. She is separated from the positive transformative type who is the wise virgin, ultimately the Virgin Mary. The celibate Church Fathers debased, feared, and raved against Eve and her dangerous sisters, e.g., Jezebel, Delilah, Bathsheba, and Salome while they extolled the virgin woman who denied her nature by denying her body.

> . . . Virginal woman was thus bound for heaven, and her male ascetic devotees would stop at nothing short of this prize for her. But they paid the price of despising all real physical women, sex and fecundity, and wholly etherealizing women into incorporeal phantasms in order to provide love objects for the sublimated libido and guard against turning back to any physical expression of love with the dangerous daughters of Eve.[33]

Three images of women were allowed by the Church Fathers: whore, wife, and virgin. The whore, a painted strumpet who is pure carnality, the "loose woman" or "adventuress" of Proverbs who lures men to destruction, is symbolized by Eve. The wife is essentially body-identified, but she is obedient to the male, for her body belongs to her husband. The role of wife, however, is intrinsically inferior to virginity. For the virgin has no body, but is a person and has spiritual equality with the male. The virgin must rise above her body, as the monk must do also; but since her nature is identical with her body, she must crush her very nature, while the

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[33]Ruether, p. 179.

nature of the male was already spiritual.[34]

> . . . For the female, virginity is not an affirmation of her being as a woman but an assumption of the nature of the male, which is identified with the truly human: rationality, strength, courage, steadfastness, loyalty.[35]

The next task, then, is to look at the Christian exemplar of the virgin, the "ideal woman," Mary.

Mary, Bringer of Salvation Into the World

The differences between Mary and the ancient goddesses are immediately apparent in the kinds of stories that are told about her. The stories about Mary from the canonical Gospels are more allusions or images, focusing on her only as she appears in Jesus' life, e.g., the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38), Visitation and Magnificat (Luke 1:39-56), Nativity (Luke 2:1-20), Flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-20), Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple (Luke 2:22-35), Marriage at Cana (John 2:1-12), Jesus' question "Who is my Mother?" (Mark 3:31-5, Luke 11:27-8), Mary on Mount Calvary (John 19:25-7), and after his death (Acts 1:12-14).

More information and elaboration of detail comes in the Apocryphal (hidden) Gospels, particularly the Protoevangelium of James, about mid-second century A. D., Gospel of

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34This is quite different from Tantric Hinduism and Buddhism, which corrected all ideas differentiating between females and males, interpreting them as principles which are equal in importance for realizing a transcendent order where females and males are partners.

35McLaughlin, p. 234.

Pseudo-Matthew, about fifth to sixth century, Arabian Gospels of Infancy, Gospel of Nicodemus, History of Joseph the Carpenter, and Passing of Holy Mary. The Apocryphal accounts give not only more detail than is in the Canon, e.g., Jesus was born in a grotto or grove of trees (feminine symbols) and there was a fountain (feminine symbol) at the Annunciation; but also, the central doctrines of Mary, e.g., her corporeal Assumption and Immaculate Conception, are found only here. The feminine is most fully expressed in the hidden gospels, the shadow of Christian orthodoxy. In the orthodox Canon, Mary has a hidden role, which is said to be appropriate for her restrained, reserved, and retiring nature, which is set as the ideal for all women.

> . . . The chief psychological characteristics of Our Lady are purity, submissiveness to God's will, the spirit of sacrifice and of willingness to forget herself in self-effacement, and strength of soul in sorrow. It is along these lines that we define the ideal woman in a sense which cannot be surpassed.[36]

It is from the less orthodox Apocrypha, then, particularly those that originated in eastern Europe and Asia Minor, that elaboration of the feminine figure of Mary occurs. It was so popular that in the fourth-century enumeration of heresies, by St. Epiphanius, a sect of women who had emigrated from Thrace to Arabia, and who offered cakes of meal and honey to the Virgin, was condemned:

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[36]Henri Daniel-Rops, The Book of Mary, trans. Alaistair Guinan (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1960), p. 35.

> . . . God came down from heaven, the Word clothed Himself with flesh from a holy Virgin, not, assuredly, that the Virgin should be adored, nor to make her god, nor that we should offer sacrifice to her name, nor that, now after so many generations, women should once again be appointed priests . . . let no one adore Mary.[37]

Worship of the feminine was clearly discouraged by the Church Fathers, but by the fourth century it had surfaced, regardless of the orthodox view. The most ancient representations of the Virgin Mary in art, in Nativity scenes or the Adoration of the Magi, appear at this time. In the early fifth-century Nestorian controversy, the position of Mary became established and her orthodoxy approved.

The major issue of the Nestorian controversy was the mystery of the Incarnation. Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, separates the divine and human in Christ's nature, as did the Arians and docetics of the preceding century. He argues that Mary was the mother of the human aspect of Christ, but not the divine aspect. She should be called Christotokos, Mother of Christ, rather than the popular title, Theotokos, Mother of God. He is reported to have asked "Does God have a mother?" and to have answered, "He does not!" He said, "I say it is the flesh that was born of the Virgin Mary not God the Word. . . . It is not right to say of God that He sucked milk. . . . I do not say that God is two or three months old."[38]

37Paul F. Palmer, ed. Mary in the Documents of the Church (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1952), p. 49.

38Fr. Burghardt, "Theotokos: Mother of God," ed. Edward P. O'Connor, The Mystery of the Woman (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), p. 9.

In September of 431 A.D., at the Church of Saint Mary in Ephesus, Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, gave expression to the Council of Ephesus' decision against Nestorius by affirming that Mary is Theotokos, Mother of God.

> Hail from us, Mary, Mother of God, majestic treasure of the whole world, . . . crown of virginity, sceptre of orthodoxy . . . dwelling of the Illimitable, mother and virgin . . . May we . . . reverence the undivided Trinity, while we sing the praise of the ever-virgin Mary, that is to say, the holy Church, and of her Spotless Son and Bridegroom.[39]

The title of Mother of God means two things: that Jesus was genuinely born of Mary (antidocetic), affirming that Jesus was truly human; and that Jesus born of Mary is God (anti-Arian), affirming that Jesus was truly divine. So, the remedy for Christological controversy was found in this act of belief in Mary. Cyril says:

> . . . To confess our faith in orthodox fashion . . . it is enough to . . . confess that the holy Virgin is Mother of God.[40]

After the condemnation of Nestorius, the artistic image of Madonna and Child proliferated as a symbolic expression of orthodox faith. The first of these effigies was made in Alexandria and they were most surely influenced by Egyptian images of Isis and Horus, the first known artistic representations of the mother and child motif.

The curious nature of the feminine in Christianity can be seen in this example. Several motifs of the archetypal

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[39]Burghardt, p. 5. [40]Burghardt, p. 12.

feminine, e.g., maternity and relationship to the body/flesh/matter/earth, are reflected in the doctrine of Mary as Theotokos. But they appear unconsciously, under the guise of rational argument and are expressed as the doctrine of Incarnation. The incarnate one, of course, is Jesus, the masculine, and Mary's significance derives totally from relationship with him. A conclusion which may be drawn, then, is that in patriarchy the feminine is seen to exist only in dependent relationship to and on the masculine. This does express accurately the Jungian concept of anima, i.e., the feminine as perceived by the masculine, but to identify the feminine as anima is to deny the feminine's experience of herself in and for herself.

While the archetypal relationship of the feminine with maternity, the positive elementary type, is accepted by orthodox Christianity after the Nestorian controversy, the unconscious relationship of the feminine to the body/matter is more ambivalent. The troublesome nature of the body is reflected in the major third- to fifth-century Christological controversies which all center on the relationship of body and spirit, human and divine, in Christ. After the controversy was dogmatized in the quizzical doctrine that Christ is fully human and fully divine, attention began to focus on the nature of Mary's body. It had been affirmed that Mary was the source of Christ's human nature and body, but the question was raised as to how God-made man, who is incarnate purity, could take his flesh from a body stained in sin. Rather than seeing the Divine made flesh as signifying a divinization of the body, the body which

the Divine took was gradually seen as less and less fleshly, for all flesh is sinful. This is articulated in the doctrines of the Virgin Birth, Perpetual Virginity, Immaculate Conception, and Assumption.

The idea of the Virgin Birth was said by the Church Fathers to have been prefigured in Isaiah 7:14, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son." The fact that the Hebrew word translated as "virgin" may also mean "young girl" and has no sexual connotations may be overlooked here, for the symbolic meaning of a virgin giving birth is archetypal and has its roots elsewhere:

> The Great Mother is a virgin, too, in a sense other than that intended by the patriarchate, which later misunderstood her as the symbol of chastity. Precisely in virtue of her fruitfulness, she is a virgin, that is, unrelated and not dependent upon any man.[41]

The earlier matriarchal concept of virgin was not simply sexual in connotation, but indicated a woman who remained identified with herself. She might give herself sexually to a man, but she actually was surrendering to her instincts, not to him, not surrendering her real self and thus remaining "one-in-herself.[42] The word "virgin" stems from the Indo-European root "werg," meaning "to enclose," thus indicating a woman who

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[41]Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1962), p. 52.

[42]M. Esther Harding, Woman's Mysteries (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p. 122. (Underlining is writer's.)

is enclosed upon her real self.[43] Virgin birth is characteristic of the Moon Mother, who alone and out of herself gives birth to the divine son who symbolizes the light of consciousness. The statement, "The virgin has given birth; the light grows."[44] refers to the ancient matriarchal mystery of the birth of the luminous son. This son is represented as Horus, Tammuz, Adonis, Mithra, Buddha,[45] and Jesus, and is a dying and rising sun god, or vegetation god. Virgin birth, then, in a matriarchal context signifies that the virgin bears her divinity in her own right. As a modern feminist expresses it:

> . . . A more feminist (or rather, matriarchal) interpretation of the Catholic Virgin birth certainly exists: it symbolizes the unique and 'miraculous' ability of women to conceive and bear children. Childbearing--the union of body and spirit that overcomes death--resides in the female principle. . . . thus it is just as we all thought as children: all our mothers immaculately conceived us and we are all divine.[46]

Artemis, in her many forms and called by many names, symbolizes this type of Virgin Mother:

> The Lady of free and untamed nature and the Mother, protectress of weaklings, a divinity in whom the contrasting principles of virginity and

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[43]Jean Markale, Women of the Celts, trans. A. Mygind and others (London: Gordon Cremonesi Publishers, 1975), p. 128.

[44]Neumann, Great Mother, p. 312.

[45]In the Mahayana Buddhist tradition the Buddha is born immaculately, his mother having conceived him in a dream-state, representing the transcendent psychic-cosmic process of the Dharmakaya (Compassionate Heart) becoming manifest in historical process.

[46]Phyllis Chesler, Women and Madness (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), p. 34.

> motherhood are fused into the concept of a single goddess, was venerated in Greece, Lydia, Crete and Italy.[47]

The patriarchal meaning of Virgin Birth is quite different, though, for the patriarchy could not allow women to possess the miraculous power of birth, which had been revered since Paleolithic times. The myth of male birth, which was expressed in the Yahwist story of Eve's creation out of Adam as interpreted by the Church Fathers, is restated in the miraculous birth of Jesus from a Virgin. The natural process within which women give birth as a result of natural sexual activity could not be allowed, so it was said that the masculine god Yahweh made Mary fertile without nature. Virgin Birth, then, signifies an antinatural birth which proves that the power of the masculine is greater than the power of the feminine. As Jerome says:

> Christ is a virgin and the Mother of our Virgin is herself ever a virgin; she is Mother and Virgin. Although the doors were shut, Jesus entered within; in the sepulchre that was Mary, which was new and hewn in hardest rock, no one either before or afterwards was laid.[48]

Mary is the Eastern gate, always shut and full of light, the sepulchre, enclosed garden, or sealed fountain (Song of Songs 4:12), which the masculine god enters, even though she has not opened herself. Jesus came by a new order and a new birth,

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47Marija Gimbutas, Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 198.

48Palmer, p. 29.

not by the natural process, so He took from His mother nature but not sin. This quotation also leads to another doctrine which was soon affirmed, Mary's Perpetual Virginity.

Not only was Mary a virgin who gave birth to Jesus, but she was, before, during, and after this event, always a virgin. In Western Christendom perpetual virginity was emphasized after 385 A.D., when a life of celibacy became obligatory for monks; and Mary became the monks' ideal. Again, Mary's perpetual virginity was interpreted differently than that of Hera, who bathed every year in the Argos to renew her virginity. Mary's virginity protected her from the evils of sexuality, to which women are wont, as is only too clear in the statement of Pope St. Siricius:

> . . . For the Lord Jesus would never have chosen to be born of a virgin if he had ever judged that she would be so incontinent as to contaminate with the seed of human intercourse the birthplace of the Lord's body, that court of the Eternal King.[49]

Mary, then, comes to express the archetype of purity, defined as freedom from the contamination of sexuality. This is beautifully expressed in the Nisibis Hymn:

> Thou and Thy Mother are the only ones who are perfectly beautiful in every respect; for there is no spot in Thee, O Lord, nor any taint in Thy Mother.[50]

Over the centuries Mary's purity became more and more emphasized and she became conceived of as less and less human and

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[49]Palmer, p. 28. [50]Palmer, p. 23.

"historical." By the thirteenth century, the question of Mary's Immaculate Conception is raised. If she is sinless and virgin throughout her life, could she have been born in sin? Acquinas denies the Immaculate Conception, but forms the question as to whether the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before her body was animated by soul. In the next century Duns Scotus replies affirmatively to the question: "Potuit, decuit, ergo fecit." that is, "God could, it was fitting that He should, therefore He did." Scotus spearheaded a movement to recognize the Immaculate Conception as dogma. By the time of Pope Sixtus IV, 1471-84, the doctrine is not dogmatized, but the Pope says that no one is a heretic for believing it and the feast is celebrated on December 8. Her feast had been celebrated in the Eastern Church from the seventh century as the "Conception of St. Ann" and was introduced to France by the twelfth century as the feast of Our Lady's Conception.

The subject of the Immaculate Conception became very popular to artists from the seventeenth century. Mary was usually portrayed as a very beautiful twelve- or thirteen-year-old maiden with golden hair, a perfect anima figure. Her hands are folded in prayer, the sun is behind her head, the moon at her feet, and she wears a crown of twelve stars. Cherubim surround her, holding flowers, and the head of the dragon is under her foot.[51] But it is not until December 8, 1854, that the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception is defined by Pope

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[51]Anna Brownell Jameson, Legends of the Madonna (Boston: L. C. Page & Company, 1852), pp. 130-31.

Pius IX.

> We pronounce and declare that the doctrine that the Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first instant of her conception, preserved and exempt, by especial grace and privilege of Almighty God foreseeing the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, from all taint of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and that it consequently must be firmly and unreservedly believed by all the faithful.[52]

Lest it be thought that the glory should be Mary's, it is clearly stated that God preserves her soul free of sin because of the merits of her Son. The feminine is declared by the masculine to be sinless and full of grace because of and through his power, and is pictured as a sweet, immature, anima figure. Her body is declared to be free of original sin, which is carried by the concupiscence of the sexual act, ever-virgin, and thus asexual, throughout her bodily life.

The logical outcome of this extreme denial of the bodily nature of Mary is the doctrine of the Assumption. The feast of the "Falling Asleep" of the Virgin was celebrated from about 600 A. D., on August 15. In Rome, about 700 A. D., there is the "Feast of Mary's Dormition," and in Gaul, about 800 A.D., it is the "Assumption." Since she was the Mother of God, and thereby exalted, it seemed that she could not be condemned to death as other mortals are. Germanus of Constantinople writes, about 720 A.D.:

> . . . inasmuch as it was impossible that the vessel which had received God, the living temple

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[52]Daniel-Rops, p. 102.

> of the sacred deity of the Only-begotten, should be held fast by death's sepulchre. Therefore, O Mother of God, we believe that thou goes about among us.[53]

Since she was perpetually virgin, she was said to be immune from the pains of childbirth and mortality. Since she was immaculately conceived and was unstained, she would not be subject to the corruption of death. As Andrew of Crete wrote in the early eighth century:

> . . . For as the womb of the Mother knew not corruption, so too the flesh of the dead did not perish.[54]

The ancient Mother of Life and Death has here been "purified" of both these functions. Since she was sinlessly born and sinlessly gave birth, so she sinlessly dies, sinless meaning without the taint of the body. The natural images of the archetypal feminine's relationship to vegetation and the earth are denied in this remarkable argument of John Damascene, eighth century, in favor of her Assumption:

> . . . There was need that this dwelling meet for God, this undug well of remission's waters, this unploughed field of heaven's bread, this unwatered vineyard of immortality's wine, this olive tree of the Father's compassion, ever green and fair and fruitful, be not imprisoned in the hollows of the earth.[55]

53Palmer, p. 58.

54Palmer, p. 59. In Hindu and Buddhist thought one may attain the condition of purity by disciplined life, and once freed, can remain in that condition. What is said of the Virgin Mary, e.g., purity, deathlessness, etc., can be earned by anyone, female or male, through a disciplined way of life.

55Palmer, p. 60.

Whether the feminine would feel "imprisoned" in the earth which She is, is not a question in the patriarchal dichotomy between the evil or corrupted earth and pure heaven. It was also argued that Christ's affection for his mother would lead him to want her bodily with him in heaven. Since it would be less dignified for her to be disincarnate, she must be assumed into heaven, body and soul; and if this is so, then she would not die, which necessitates a separation of body and soul.

Although this feast was celebrated from the sixth century, official proclamation of the Assumption of the Virgin did not occur until November 1, 1950, by Pope Pius XII, who announced:

> . . . the Immaculate and ever-virgin Mother of God, when she had come to the end of her earthly pilgrimage, was raised in soul and in body to heavenly glory.[56]

The length of time that it took for popular worship of the Virgin's Assumption to be approved by the Papacy indicates somthing of the conflict between papal Rome and the Virgin. While the people saw the feminine as divine, though only unconsciously, in the image of Mary, Queen of Heaven, sitting at the right hand of Christ, the orthodox Christian patriarchy would have liked her to have remained prostrate at the foot of the Cross. Carl Jung saw in this official proclamation of Mary's place in heaven a sign of hope. He said that for a psychologist:

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[56] Daniel-Rops, p. 105.

> . . . the relationship to the earth and to matter is one of the inalienable qualities of the mother archetype. So that when a figure that is conditioned by this archetype is represented as having been taken up into heaven, the realm of the spirit, this indicates a union of earth and heaven, or of matter and spirit.[57]

However, the type of union that can occur when the earth image (the body of Mary) has been purified so much that it has little resemblance to an ordinary human body, is questionable. It is this very repugnance to the earth quality of the feminine archetype and the association of body with a despiritualized totally instinctually and debased form of sexuality that characterizes Christianity, Protestant as well as Catholic. What difference does it make for Mary to sit in heaven when Eve has been consigned to Hell, and ordinary women are taught to aspire to be Mary while they are treated like Eve?

This ambivalence in the Christian attitude toward the feminine is made most clear in the two images of Mary and Eve and the articulated relationship between them. The Church Fathers saw Mary as a theological idea which played a basic part in the economy of salvation. As the early Christians saw the economy of salvation, or God's plan for the world, humanity fell through the act of the evil woman Eve and was redeemed through the act of the good woman Mary. As Augustine put it: "Through the woman, death; through the woman life."[58] Mary is contrasted with Eve in terms of obedience to God's will; for as

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[57] Jung, p. 108   [58] Daly, p. 88.

Eve listened to the serpent and disobeyed God, Mary gave her fiat to God's will as announced by the angel, indicating her acceptance of what God planned to accomplish through her. Justin expresses it in this way:

> Eve, an undefiled virgin, conceived the word of the serpent and brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary replied to the Angel Gabriel's good tidings with joy and belief. . . . She said, 'Be it done to me according to Thy Word.'[59]

And Irenaeus expresses it in this way:

> Just as the virgin Eve had Adam for a husband . . . became disobedient and caused her death and that of all humanity, so the Virgin Mary had a predestined husband, remained obedient and caused salvation for herself and the whole human race.[60]

Mary was described as the daughter of Eve, who paid her mother's debt, in the devotional poetry of St. Ephrem the Syrian, of the fourth century.[61] The debt was not simply the debt humanity had accrued by sinning, but was specifically woman's debt, as St. Cyril of Jerusalem, fourth century, points out:

> . . . From whom was Eve begotten at the beginning? What mother conceived her who was without mother? Do not the Scriptures say that she was formed from the side of a man? Why cannot a child be born without a father from the womb of a virgin? Woman owed a debt of gratitude to man, for Eve sprang from Adam, conceived by no mother, but brought forth as it were by man alone. Now Mary paid this debt of gratitude when, through the power of God, of herself alone and not by man, immaculately She brought forth by the Holy Spirit.[62]

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[59]Otto Semmelroth, Mary, Archetype of the Church, trans. Maria von Eroes and John Devlin (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p. 17.

[60]Semmelroth, p. 17. [61]Palmer, p. 20.

[62]Palmer, p. 8.

The concept of the special sinfulness of the female sex, symbolized as Eve, was effaced by Mary, who functions as the Redeemer of women.

> In place of the virgin Eve, mediatrix of death, a virgin has been filled with God's grace to be the minister of life; a virgin has been fashioned possessing the nature of a woman, but without part in her fault (malice); a virgin, innocent, without blemish, all-immaculate, inviolate, spotless, holy in soul and body, who has blossomed as a lily among thorns, unlearned in the evil ways of Eve.[63]

Mary's place, then, in the economy of salvation as the second Eve, is as Co-Redemptrix. She redeems not only all humanity through her bringing forth the male Redeemer, but she represents women in general as the Christ, born in a male body, represents males in general. The two of them, the co-redeemers, make salvation possible for all people. But even though she undoes the evil of Eve and is the glorification of the feminine principle in Christianity, she is glorified only in part and always in opposition to the negative and evil feminine. Her role is always and only secondary, as Acquinas codifies it in the Catholic view:

> . . . Mary 'began' the work of salvation as Eve 'began' the work of perdition. That the female sex might not be excluded from this saving work, Christ took his flesh from his mother, but the nature and role of Mary still remains necessarily secondary and derivative. She owes all that she is to the Son.[64]

Mary is the Christian symbol of the sanctity of the redeemed, purified, and transfigured feminine, the positive transformative type, but she is always secondary to and dependent on the

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[63]Palmer, p. 52. [64]McLaughlin, p. 220.

masculine for her power, and she is always seen in opposition to the negative transformative figure of Eve. This serves to limit both her ability to raise the valuation of the feminine in Christianity, leaving it a masculinely-dominated religion, and to serve as a dynamic symbol of spiritual transformation mediating the wisdom of the feminine divine.

But the Judeo-Christian problem arising from the Mary/Eve (male/female, good/evil, superior/inferior) dichotomy is dependent on a theistic picture of the Divine as an ultimate Masculine principle. The Tantric interpretation of an experiential process leading through compassion and insight to a transcendental order is not limited to identification with one of the poles of existence, i.e., the masculine principle, but teaches a disciplined way of life. In this way of life, females and males are equal partners moving toward realization of a transcendent order which is beyond and inclusive of the relativities of female/male. If the Divine is interpreted transexually, then the problems of a Mary/Eve dichotomy, the elevation of part of the feminine (Mary--positive transformative) against another (Eve--negative transformative) is only a stage towards a final process, which may be symbolized as giving birth to an androgenous Holy Spirit. In the next two chapters the ground for a revisualization of the feminine in Christianity and patriarchal culture has been provided for consideration, not as an ultimate or excluding other suggestions, but as a possible alternative.

Chapter 9

COMPARISON OF CHRISTIAN VIEW AND ARCHETYPAL FEMININE

Despite the rationally articulated view of Mary and Eve that was presented by the Church Fathers and which has been maintained in orthodox Christianity, many vestiges of the ancient worship of the Goddess emerged from popular thought and merged with the Biblical Mary to produce the medieval Queen of Heaven, and with the Biblical Eve to produce the Queen of the Underworld, the Witch. These historically traceable motifs give evidence of the Jungian concept of the collective unconscious whose archetypes reassert and form themselves from the depths of the human psyche in every time and place. So, although Christian theology repeatedly asserted the primacy of the male and the exclusive existence of one male divine figure, the people worshipped and revered the feminine in some form. It is as though from the people the question arose as to whether there still was a kind and welcoming mother goddess who would beg her son to show tolerance and would rebel against this tyranny of her divine husband reincarnated in her son. Christian doctrine was forced to respond and therefore allowed Mary the position of Theotokos, restricting this both by the patriarchal conception of virginity and by her derivative status as mother/servant to her son. Though twisted and distorted, the archetypal feminine could not be

totally denied.

> . . . Yet every one of the mythic motifs now dogmatically attributed to Mary as a historic human being belongs also--and belonged in the period and place of the development of her cult--to that goddess mother of all things, of whom both Mary and Isis were local manifestations: the mother-bride of the dead and resurrected god, whose earliest known representations now must be assigned to a date as early, at least, as about 5500 B. C.[1]

Campbell pushes this date back to 5700 B. C., based on a discovery of mother-goddess statuettes in Anatolia, but the Hacilar culture in which these statuettes appeared dates from about 7000 B. C. The latter date is more in keeping with the figurines of Old Europe discussed in chapter 4 of this work. Campbell concludes that, although historical continuity between the Paleolithic cult of the naked goddess of the hunting culture and the Neolithic cult of the Near Eastern Great Goddess is unclear, there is an unbroken continuity from the Neolithic cult of 7000 B. C. to Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1531 A. D.

> . . . The entire ancient world, from Asia Minor to the Nile and from Greece to the Indus Valley, abounds in figurines of the naked female form, in various attitudes, of the all-supporting, all-including goddess. . . . Such figurines are demonstrably related, furthermore, to the well-known Bronze Age myths and cults of the Great Goddess of many names, one of whose most celebrated temples stood precisely at Ephesus, where, in the year 431 A.D., the dogma of Mary as Theotokos, 'Mother of God,' was in Council proclaimed. . . . And so it came to pass that,

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[1]Joseph Campbell, Masks of God: Occidental Mythology (New York: Vintage Press, 1964), p. 43.

> in the end and to our day Mary, Queen of Martyrs, became the sole inheritor of all the names and forms, sorrows, joys, and consolations of the goddess-mother in the Western World: Seat of Wisdom . . . Vessel of Honor . . . Mystical Rose . . . House of Gold . . . Gate of Heaven . . . Morning Star . . . Refuge of Sinners . . . Queen of Angels . . . Queen of Peace.[2]

Even the conservative twentieth-century Catholic theologian Mieggi admitted:

> . . . the Virgin Mary could not have become the Queen of the Church Militant and Triumphant if she had not been seated on the throne of Isis and if she had not put on the turreted crown of Cybele.[3]

The first part of this chapter, therefore, will focus on various archetypal motifs which are associated with Mary. Examples have been chosen to reflect these symbolic motifs; they are not completely or exhaustively described in an historical context. But Mary, contrary to Campbell, is not the "sole inheritor" of the attributes of the Great Goddess, but only of the positive attributes. She is separated and split from her ancient underworld sister and these qualities are attributed to Eve and her earthly sisters, the witches.

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[2]Campbell, pp. 44-5. If this evolution of the figure of the Goddess is granted, then the worship of the Paleolithic goddess in figurines of the naked female form symbolizes a perfected condition that was realized at that early stage of human culture. This realization cannot be superseded by a posterior so-called "higher" civilized order, rather, the later historical developments may be construed as a fall from the exalted condition of the earliest cults.

[3]Giovanni Mieggi, The Virgin Mary: the Roman Catholic Marian Doctrine, trans. Waldo Smith (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955), p. 81.

Mary as Great Goddess

Of course, the primary symbol of the Great Goddess which is attributed to Mary is the vessel/womb. No matter how far men try to remove themselves from the feminine, they must acknowledge the feminine power that gave them birth. The symbol of Mary as the Good Mother is expressed in Pope Pius X's speech in 1904 on "Mary Mediatrix of All Graces":

> . . . And thus, in one and the same bosom of his most chaste Mother, Christ, at one and the same time, assumed flesh and united to Himself a spiritual body which is joined together from those 'who were to believe in him' (Jn 17:20). In this way, Mary, by bearing the Savior in her womb, can be said to have borne all those whose life was contained in the life of the Savior. All of us, therefore, who are united with Christ and are, as the Apostle says, 'members of his body, made from his flesh and his bones' (Eph. 5:30), have come forth from the womb of Mary . . . Hence in a spiritual and mystical sense we are called the children of Mary and she is Mother of us all.[4]

Her womb was seen as the dwelling place of the Most High, as the container of what cannot be contained; as Augustine put it, ". . . the bridal chamber of this exalted marriage between the Word and flesh is thy womb."[5]

Mary's womb is not a symbol of natural fertility, however, but expresses to the Christian mind the power of the divine to make the virgin womb fertile. As Theodotus of Ancyra describes it, "O earth unsown that flowered forth fruit that saves! O Virgin who surpasses Eden's garden of delights!"[6]

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[4]Paul F. Palmer, ed. Mary in the Documents of the Church (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1952), p. 94.

[5]Palmer, p. 32. [6]Palmer, p. 51.

Sown earth would describe a natural process but this is not honored or valued; the antinatural "earth unsown" is eulogized instead. This devaluation or evolutionary "fall" of the feminine, can be clearly seen in the early Church Fathers who upheld a body-mind schism in which the feminine was identified with body and the masculine with mind. They acknowledged the feminine body-vessel symbol, stating that the male sperm was in itself complete and perfect, needing only a mindless receptacle, a "bag," in which to grow. This echoes the classical Greek view which said men alone created the child and the mother's womb was only a "suitable receptacle." Both of these patriarchal views missed the symbolic quality of "vessel," understanding it only in a materialistic, literalistic sense and thereby distorting the meaning of the feminine vessel. While Mary's womb was idealized and Mary seen as spiritual mother, this valuation did not extend to the natural womb and normal motherhood.

Another Christian symbol which expresses this maternal quality is the cup, chalice, or grail. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Christian bards referred to Mary as the cauldron or source of inspiration,[7] and many medieval hymns addressed her as "vase," "chosen vessel," and "sacred Grail."[8] The cup which is used in the Mass to hold the blood of Christ

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[7]Robert Graves, The White Goddess (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1948), p. 393.

[8]Henry Adams, Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), pp. 102-3.

is a symbol of feminine transformation as the wine is changed to blood, even as in the mother's breast blood is transformed into milk. The Grail legends of the Middle Ages express this search for essential femininity as the knight searching for the Grail which held Christ's blood at the Last Supper.

> . . . As a cup or chalice it is the breast bestowing food; but, more than that, it is a container into which the Christianised versions put the blood of Christ and so presumably represents his mother, the Virgin Mary. So the Grail-chalice is the uterus of the mother goddess, which will give life to all the creatures of the world once it has been fertilised.[9]

The symbol of Mary as Mother is also related to the archetypal feminine element of water, perhaps suggestive of the watery womb from which everyone emerged. St. Peter Chrysologus, of the early fifth century, wrote:

> Mary is called Mother. And when is Mary not a mother? 'The gathering together of the waters he called sea (maria)' (Gen. 1:10). Was it not she who conceived in her single womb the people going out of Egypt, that it might come forth a heavenly progeny reborn to a new creation, according to the words of the Apostle: 'Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all in Moses were baptised, in the cloud, and in the sea' (Exod. 15:20-21)?[10]

Ambrose also refers to Mary as a cloud who, ". . . waters the earth with the rain of Christ's grace."[11] There were cults of trees, stones, and springs which people burned light by until the Council of Avignon banned this in 442 A. D. Then images

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9Jean Markale, Women of the Celts, trans. A. Mygind and others (London: Gordon Cremonesi Publishers, 1975), p. 174.

10Palmer, p. 39. 11Palmer, p. 27.

of the Virgin were raised near many springs and decorated with flowers and candles. One name of Mary is "pégé," which means spring.[12]

Mary's maternal aspect is symbolized in the image of the Mater Dolorosa, the Suffering Mother. The most famous artistic representation of this aspect is Michaelangelo's Pieta, which shows Mary with the body of her crucified Son on her lap. She is, then the mother of the crucified redeemer, the mother of the atoning sacrifice, the queen of martyrs. She is pictured with her bosom pierced by a sword, symbolizing the one through whose sorrow the world was saved, whose anguish was humanity's joy, and thus she is the consoler of the afflicted. As Mater Dolorosa she is also pictured standing at the foot of the Cross, and is worshipped at the feast of Seven Dolors as she who understands all grief. She is similar in this aspect to Demeter, the sorrowing mother of Persephone, as each grieves for her child who has descended to the underworld. But the difference between the patriarchal and matriarchal concept of the feminine is clearly exemplified here, for Demeter is a powerful figure who in her sorrow becomes angry and curses the earth, making everything infertile until her child is returned to her, parallel to Ishtar's making the land infertile until she returns from the underworld. Mary, however, is powerless and can do no more than weep.

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[12]Emma Jung, Animus and Anima, trans. Carl Baynes and Hildegard Nagel (New York: Spring Publications, 1957), p. 86.

Mary's aspect as Mater Dolorosa is closely related to her image as Virgin of Mercy, Mother of Divine Grace, Refuge of Sinners, Comforter of the Afflicted, Our Lady of Consolation, Our Lady of Hope, Mediatrix, Concilatrix, and Co-Redemptrix. She is often pictured as a "mantle" Madonna wearing a huge cloak which shelters needy people who huddle underneath. The sculpture of the Vierge Ouvrante[13] on the outside is an unassuming figure of mother and child, but when the figure is opened up, God the Father and Son are inside her body; they are the contents of her all-sheltering body. This is exactly parallel to the feminine as Great Mother in her positive elementary character of caring for the needy and as the Great Round who contains all phenomena within her.

Her most powerful maternal image is, perhaps, the Virgin of Mercy, and this was doctrinally supported in her role as Co-Redemptrix. All grace, it was said, came to people through her through whom Christ came. It was she who gave birth to the redeemer and she who offered him up at the crucifixion, so as mother of his birth and death she participated with Christ in redeeming people.

> . . . Thus she [Mary] suffered and all but died along with her Són suffering and dying; thus, for the salvation of men she abdicated the rights of a mother towards her son, and insofar as it was hers to do, she immolated the Son to placate God's justice, so that she herself may justly be said to

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[13]Erich Neumann, The Great Mother, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 176-77 plates.

> have redeemed together with Christ the human race.[14]

As God and Christ became more awesome and unapproachable, doling out stern justice, symbolized by the apocalyptic rider on a white horse with a sword in his mouth, Mary became the accessible, gentle, and merciful refuge of sinners who sheltered her children under her robe and interceded with her son at their death. Mary was said to be seized with sadness at the sight of sinners and acted miraculously on behalf of those who called to her in distress. By the eighth century she is invoked as the sole dispenser of grace.

> For no one, Lady all-holy, is saved except through thee, all-holy one. . . . No one, Lady most chaste, is favored with any gift except through thee. No one, Lady most venerable, is given the merciful gift of grace except through thee.[15]

And this theme is consistently maintained in Catholicism, as Pope Leo XIII said in 1891:

> . . . just as no one can have access to the Father Most High except through the Son, so, in almost the same way, no one can have access to the Son except through the Mother.[16]

When she is the one who has sole access to the divine, the archetypal quality of the feminine as door or gate is expressed. Along with the cave and the body-vessel, the gate as

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[14]Palmer, p. 97. [15]Palmer, p. 57.

[16]Palmer, p. 91. Here is a definite elevation of the feminine principle, at least in the context of the mother-son relationship, though not in the context of mother-father or mother-daughter relationships.

entrance and womb is a primordial symbol of the Great Mother.[17] As the womb is the gate to life and all who are born must enter through this gate, Mary is the only gate to God through Christ. This is exemplified in statues of Mary and the Child placed on the central pillar which divides the huge entranceway of many cathedrals, with the text "I am the Door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."[18] Images of Mary were also found on doorways to homes, gates of gardens, and other entrances.

Mary's power as Co-Redemptrix is diminished when she is seen as the giver of an emotional, irrational mercy in opposition to the rational justice of Christ. This is not reflective of the matriarchal goddess of justice seen in Themis or Nemesis, but shows the unbalanced character of the patriarchal feminine.

> . . . In medieval times, the Virgin Mary was represented as taking under her cloak the sinners, who, under divine law, would go to hell or purgatory, but for whom she obtained better conditions. That men make the laws and deal with worldly matters and women have the role of pleading for leniency fits the old patriarchal family pattern, where father does the punishing and insists on school work, and mother begs for leniency, saying that father is too severe.[19]

It is constantly asserted by the Catholic hierarchy that Mary's

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[17]Neumann, p. 158.

[18]Anna Brownell Jameson, Legends of the Madonna (Boston: L. C. Page and Company, 1852), p. 154.

[19]Marie Louise von Franz, The Feminine in Fairytales (New York: Spring Publications, 1972), p. 33.

privileges are only the effect of God's power, and that she is not worthy of devotion in herself. Luther protested this separation between Christ and Mary into divine judgment and divine grace, affirming the polarity of judgment and mercy in Yahweh, and denying that Mary has any power of her own. And Mieggi, writes:

> In Marian piety the great evangelical paradox of a righteous God who can be more than justice resolves itself into its antithetical elements: on one side a divinity all severity and all justice; and on the other a compassion that is all human and without justice. It is a compassion that finds an immortal symbol in the woman and mother but also finds in her its disquieting limitations, for it is outside the ethical, like the maternal instinct that without discrimination is always on the side of the son however depraved, and covers the guilt with indulgent complicity . . . the grace is not a pity that is divine or human-divine, but only human, only feminine.[20]

Patriarchal contempt is expressed here for the quality of all-encompassing love described as "unethical complicity" and "only feminine."

Two final aspects of Mary's maternal character are expressed in the symbols of Mary as humanity and Mary as the Church. The inner life of the Catholic church is personified as Mary, as in pictures where she stands between Peter and Paul. Mary is not the ministering or hierarchical church, not the divine in the church, but is the human, believing church. When Mary gave her fiat to the angel and accepted God's plan for her life, she did this on behalf of all humanity and thus

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[20] Mieggi, p. 153.

realized in herself the union of God and humanity in the mystical Body of Christ. What existed in germ in Mary is said to be fully expressed in the spiritual reality that is the Church. The Church, like Mary, is a chaste virgin (Origen), the bride of God, who as Mater Ecclesia is the agent through which souls are born again. So Christ is conceived in the soul of a Christian as He was in the body of Mary, through the agency of the Church. Salvation is like a marriage between God and Israel, between Christ and the Church, between God the Holy Spirit and Mary.

> . . . In this marriage God is everywhere and always the man, the bridegroom; humanity is everywhere and always the woman, the bride. In this inspired figure of salvation it is the male who symbolizes the initiative and the power of God; it is the female who symbolizes the active receptivity of humanity and the fruitfulness which union with God communicates to it.[21]

A second type of archetypal motif attributed to Mary is the nature symbol. Although the Mother of God has been divested of all the essential qualities of materiality, and matter has been de-souled, she is still related to various natural elements, both animal and plant. St. Ephrem the Syrian uses several images to describe Mary in his poetry. He extols her as the garden, "Mary is the garden upon which descended from the Father the rain of benedictions."[22] He

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[21]Fr. Burghardt, "Theotokos; Mother of God," ed. Edward P. O'Connor, The Mystery of the Woman (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), p. 20.

[22]Palmer, p. 16.

identifies this garden as Eden:

> God's Eden is Mary; in her is no tree of knowledge [experience of good and evil], no serpent that harms, no Eve that kills, but from her springs the Tree of Life that restores the exiles to Eden.[23]

Since the Tree of Life springs from her, she also is the Tree of Life bearing the fruit of salvation, Christ:

> On the branch of the Virgin Mary, God, coming down from on high, hung the fruit, of which in Eden they had not tasted [of the Tree of Life]; from Mary they plucked it.[24]

The Neolithic identification of the feminine with earth and its fruitfulness was symbolized as a garden, e.g., Gulabun's garden, and is expressed here. There is also the Biblical symbol of the enclosed garden of Song of Songs (4:12). One of the symbols of the Great Mother, particularly in Northern Europe, is the great World Tree with roots reaching down into the underworld and branches reaching to heaven. So the image of Mary as the Tree of Life has archetypal roots. The Biblical images of the cedar of Lebanon, palm, plantain, cypress, and olive tree are shown in medieval pictures of the Virgin to represent her greatness, beauty, and goodness. The symbol of Mary as a plant and her son as the plant's fruit is intimately connected with the grain mother, corn mother, and vegetation mother. In a fifteenth-century Bavarian woodcut Mary is pictured as the "Madonna of the Sheaves."[25]

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[23]Palmer, p. 22. [24]Palmer, p. 21.

[25]Neumann, p. 264.

> . . . The Great Mother with the ear of corn, her corn son, is an archetype whose power extends as far as the mysteries of Eleusis, the Christian Madonna, and the wheaten Host in which the wheaten body of the son is eaten.[26]

And Mary is symbolized by flowers, particularly the lily, representing purity, and the rose, representing love and beauty (see Song of Songs 2:1,2). The lily was the flower of the Cretan virgin goddess, and the rose of Ishtar, Isis, and Demeter.

Mary is related not only to the earth, but also to the sky. In many medieval pictures of her she wears a star embroidered on her shoulder, showing her as Stella Maris. Her Hebrew name, Miriam, means Star of the Sea, and she is also called the Star of Jacob, the Morning Star, and the Fixed Star. The planet Venus is often identified as the morning star and so it was attributed to Aphrodite, who, as Aphrodite Uranios, wears a starry mantle. Mary is sometimes pictured with a crown of twelve stars on her head, as described of the figure of the woman in Revelations 12:1-17. This woman was clothed with the sun and had the moon under her feet. The Church Fathers called Mary the Moon of the Church, the Spiritual Moon, and the Perfect and Eternal Moon.[27] Thus Mary becomes the Queen of Heaven ruling the celestial bodies, as did Ishtar before her.

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[26] Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1962) pp. 49-50.

[27] M. Esther Harding, Woman's Mysteries (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p. 117.

Indeed, Ishtar's heavenly dove, orthodoxly interpreted as the Holy Spirit, is often pictured with Mary, as in a window at Chartres which shows Mary as Queen, with a dove above her. The dove is, of course, the symbol of the Cretan dove goddess who is related to the Neolithic Bird Goddess. The bird in its connection with Athene comes to symbolize wisdom, and therefore indicates that Mary is also seen as a wisdom goddess. Other animals are also associated with Mary. The toad has been shown to be an epiphany of the transformative feminine from Neolithic times.[28]

> Toads made of wax, iron, silver and wood are to be found to this day as votive offerings to the Virgin Mary in churches in Bavaria, Austria, Hungary, Moravia and Yugoslavia; ethnographers have recorded more than a hundred instances in Bavaria alone.[29]

Some of these votive offerings have human heads, or a sign of the vulva on the underside, or a sign of the cross on the back. In Crete, Mary is worshipped as the "Virgin Mary of the Bear," reminiscent of Artemis Brauronia, who is a bear; and of the Neolithic image of the Bear Mother.

> . . . In the cave of Acrotiri near ancient Kydonia, a festival in honour of Panagia (Mary) Arkoudiotissa ('she of the bear') is celebrated on the second day of February.[30]

February 2, in the orthodox Catholic calendar, is the Feast of

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28See above, ch. 4, p. 78.

29Marija Gimbutas, Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 177.

30Gimbutas, p. 200.

Purification in the Temple, the time when the infant Jesus was presented at the Temple and Simeon and the Prophetess Anna extolled him (Luke 2:22-38). But February 2 was also the time of Candlemas, the winter festival of the witches, dating from an ancient era.

One other date may be noted in which an earlier festival of a goddess became a feast day of Mary. It has been mentioned that August 13 was a festival to Hecate at which prayers were offered to prevent summer storms from destroying the crops.[31] August 13 was also a feast time of the goddess Diana or Vesta, celebrated with cider and clusters of apples. Mary was said to have died on August 13, and the apocryphal Syriac text, "The Departure of My Lady Mary from This World," notes the following:

> . . . And the apostles also ordered that there should be a commemoration of the Blessed one on the thirteenth of Ab [that is August], on account of the vines bearing fruit, that clouds of hail, bearing stones of wrath, might not come, and the trees be broken, and the fruit, and the vines with their clusters.[32]

Archetypal motifs and ancient practices seep through the rational belief system of orthodox Christianity. Another example of this phenomenon is the erection of sanctuaries to the Virgin Mary at, for example, Puy-en-Velay and Notre Dame at Chartres, on sites consecrated to a female Celtic divinity.

31See above, ch. 7, p. 187.

32Harding, p. 129.

Two more examples of the many which could be cited will have to suffice here. From Neolithic times the feminine is symbolized by a mirror, indicating the reflective nature of anima consciousness. In India, Śakti is said to be the pure mirror of Śiva. Mary is titled the Mirror of Justice and said to be not only a mirror of God's will for all people, but also a created reflection of eternal divine love. A mirror often accompanies Mary in pictures of the Immaculate Conception; and at the October 16 Feast of the Purity of Our Lady she is described as an unspotted mirror of God's majesty. Secondly, in Neolithic times a column flanked by lions symbolized the feminine and in Crete the goddess is often worshipped as a pillar, the axis mundi. At Chartres one window is entitled Virgin of the Pillar; and the Virgin was worshipped as "Our Lady of the Pillar," commemorating the time she descended from heaven standing on an alabaster pillar and appeared to St. James of Santiago.

A third type of archetypal motif which will be mentioned here is Mary's image as Queen and Wisdom Goddess. She has been described as Queen of Heaven, wearing a starry mantle. She is not only Queen of Heaven, but Queen of the Kingdom of God: "He died that all men might be of the Kingdom of God; He died that Mary might be that Kingdom's Queen."[33] There are many pictures of Mary enthroned both with and without her child, and as Adams points out, ". . . wherever we find her

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33O'Connor, p. 51.

at Chartres, and of whatever period, she is always Queen."[34] In Celtic mythology the hero seeks the hierogamos with the feminine divine, symbolized as queen, in order that he may be transformed into a king, e.g., Lancelot and Queen Guinevere, Tristan and Queen Iseult, Cu Chulainn and Blathnait, Queen of the Other World.[35] So the pairing of Christ King and Mary Queen has archetypal echoes in other mythologies.

Associated with the image of Mary, Queen of Heaven, is Mary as the Virgo Sapientissima, Wisest Virgin. Medieval pictures show Mary sitting on a throne, at the right hand of Christ, intently reading the Book of Wisdom, which is resting on her lap. When asked whether the Blessed Virgin possessed perfectly the seven liberal arts, Albertus Magnus replied:

> . . . I hold that she did, for it is written, 'Wisdom has built herself a house, and has sculptured seven columns.' That house is the blessed Virgin; the seven columns are the seven liberal arts. Mary, therefore, had perfect mastery of science.[36]

And St. Gandentius, fifth century, calls her the Mother of Wisdom.

> . . . For what could be hidden from the Mother of Wisdom, from one who was able to contain God, who was the very temple of such great power.[37]

Mary expresses the positive transformative feminine character symbolized as the Goddess of Wisdom or Inspiration. The Indian

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[34]Adams, p. 162. [35]Markale, p. 142.

[36]Adams, pp. 99-100. [37]Palmer, p. 42.

wisdom goddess Sarasvatī gives all wisdom, beauty, art, and music in this world; she is pictured sitting on a white lotus (flower symbology), and she organizes, builds, and manifests the intricate subtleties of all phenomena. The Greek wisdom goddess Athene represents the heights of pure, transcendent being, the wisdom of illumination. It is Mary as Sophia who expresses this aspect of the feminine as wisdom in Christianity.

The Church's view of the Trinity eliminated any female element, but the concept of Sophia, divine wisdom, arose anyway, claiming Scriptural base in wisdom texts like Proverbs 8. Gnostics like Irenaeus interpreted the Holy Spirit as the feminine Sophia,[38] while other Christians designated Sophia as a fourth hypostasis[39] of the Trinity through which nature partakes of divine life but which is outside the triune God. Neo-Platonists called Sophia the ideal or intelligible world. But Sophia is not ideal in an abstract way, for she is the world-creating power, the creative cosmic reflection of the eternal

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[38]The concept of Sophia may be related to the concept of consort in the Tantras, where each male deity appears with a female partner. If the Holy Spirit is Sophia-like, then the Gnostic view is close to the Tantric concept of consort, and a divine family appears in the Trinity, e.g., Father, Holy Spirit, and Son.

[39]In Indian thought there is always a place for the 'fourth' behind the apparent 'three,' e.g., Turiya state of the Upaniṣads and Aurobindo's 'Fourth' as the 'Supermind' connecting the transcendent triadic orders (Sat, Chid, Ānanda) to the material principle.

divine Logos through which all things are made. As Christ is identified in the Fourth Gospel with the Logos, so Mary comes to be identified with Sophia. In the sense of her pouring forth the rich creative fullness of life, she parallels the Indian concept of Śakti, the divine energy which creatively manifests the universe. Sophia also expresses the plan of the world pre-existent in God's mind and in this aspect parallels Sarasvatī as well as the Empress of the Tarot:

> . . . This sum of detailed concepts, all still in one in this world, is identified in scholastic teaching with the feminine archetypal figure of the Wisdom of God, and was called the sum of the typi, or archetypi ideae.[40]

When identified with the Holy Spirit, Sophia is related to the dove and the moon. For the horns of the moon are sometimes seen as wings and so the light of the moon which brings wisdom is symbolized as a dove:

> . . . The Sophia, the Holy Wisdom of the Gnostics, is, in fact, the light of the Heavenly Mother and is equated to the Holy Dove of the Spirit.[41]

This Gnostic theory is charming and archetypally illustrated in the Ethiopian Legends of Our Lady Mary, identifying the Holy Spirit, a pearl and a white bird, as well as identifying Mary as the daughter of a triune goddess.

> Hannah, the 'twenty-pillared tabernacle of Testimony' who was the Virgin Mary's mother, was one of a triad of sisters--of which the other two were another Mary and Sophia. 'The Virgin first came down into the body of Seth,

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40von Franz, p. 130. 41Harding, p. 62.

> shining like a white pearl.' Then successively entered Enos, Cainon . . . Abraham, . . . David, Solomon . . . and Joachim. 'And Joachim said to his wife Hannah: "I saw Heaven open and a white bird came therefrom and hovered over my head." Now, this bird had its being in the days of old. . . . It was the Spirit of Life in the form of a white bird and . . . became incarnate in Hannah's womb when the pearl went forth from Joachim's loins and . . . Hannah received it, namely the body of our Lady Mary. The white pearl is mentioned for its purity, and the white bird because Mary's soul existed aforetime with the Ancient of Days. . . . Thus bird and pearl are alike and equal.' From the Body of Mary, the pearl, the white bird of the spirit then entered into Jesus at the Baptism.[42]

However, all birds are not white, and dark birds can express a different quality of the feminine. The Celtic triad of war goddesses all are capable of changing into birds, e.g., Morrigane the "queen of nightmares" and "nocturnal demon," Macha, a mare goddess, and Badb, a crow goddess. Celtic mythology tells many stories of bird-women who are magical, with the power to engender, to cure, and to re-create the primordial paradise.

The war or death goddess is a slight, but present, aspect of Mary. The medieval military class was devoted to her and took her image into battle, sometimes on both sides of the battle. There is a class of votive pictures dedicated to Our Lady of Victory in which she is often pictured with warrior saints, e.g., St. Michael, St. Barbara, etc. Her image as death goddess is seen in statues and pictures of the Black Virgin.

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[42]Graves, p. 163, footnote.

> There are in Europe to this day certain shrines of Mary, Mother of God, Moon of the Church, in which the image of Mary is black.[43]

At the Church of Notre Dame de la Recourance in Orléans there is a statue of the Black Virgin; at Notre Dame de Monserrat both Virgin and child are black; the north rose window at Notre Dame at Chartres shows a dark Virgin and fair child; nearby in a crypt beside a deep well an ancient image of the Black Virgin was found; and at the shrine of the Black Virgin of Einsiedeln, Switzerland, she stands on the moon.[44]

A reflection of the death mother may be seen in the rosary, developed by St. Dominic about the eleventh century. The prayer offered to Mary on the beads includes the angels' acclaiming Mary at the annunciation, i.e., birth mother, and a special petition to her at death, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, now and at the hour of our death." Through the logical system of Christian dogma, the archetypal Birth and Death Goddess reveals herself. As Augustine said, unbeknownst to himself, "Through the woman, death; through the woman, life."[45]

Eve as Great Goddess

Although Mary carries a touch of the dark side of the feminine archetype, she is almost without any shadow. But wherever there is light, there is dark, and the shadow side

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43Harding, p. 132. 44Harding, p. 133.

45Mary Daly, The Church and the Second Sex, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Colophon, 1975), p. 8d.

must be expressed somewhere, so it is identified with Eve. Marie Louise von Franz clearly notes this process:

> . . . The cult of the mother goddess got stuck and suppressed and then reappeared later in the cult of the Virgin Mary, but with great mental reservations and precautions for disinfection of her dark aspect. She was once more admitted, but only in so far as man approved, and if she behaved. The dark aspect of the antique mother-goddess has not yet reappeared in our civilization, which must leave a question mark in our minds because naturally something is lacking.[46]

Von Franz means that the dark aspect has not been allowed into the godhead but it has appeared in civilization. For, as Jung has pointed out, according to the law of compensation, whatever appears in consciousness constellates its opposite in the unconscious.

> . . . The female element in the deity is kept very dark, the interpretation of the Holy Ghost as Sophia being considered heretical. Hence the Christian metaphysical drama, the 'Prologue in Heaven,' has only masculine actors. . . . But the female element must obviously be somewhere--so it is presumably to be found in the dark.[47]

The darkness of the female aspect in the lunar matriarchal view is a part of the cyclical rhythmic change of all phenomena and the value of darkness is known.

> . . . There are secret things of the soul that can only grow in the dark--the clear sun of consciousness burns the life away.[48]

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[46]von Franz, pp. 21-2.

[47]Carl Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, trans. R. C. F. Hull, Collected Works XII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 144.

[48]von Franz, p. 90.

But darkness to solar patriarchal consciousness is not only unknown and fearful, but judged as morally evil. The patriarchal splitting of opposites necessitates the existence of a dark, evil, unconscious, and repressed aspect to balance the light, good, conscious aspect, so something is always in the shadow. There is always an enemy. And the dark aspect of the feminine is the Christian shadow par excellence. The present writer wants to present a healthy alternative to this Christian process; not as compensation but as a positive contribution.

The dark side of the feminine archetype, characterized by Neumann as negative elementary and negative transformative, is symbolized by the Death Goddess and the Goddess of drunkenness and disintegration. Mythologically this is the figure of the Queen of the Underworld seen in Persephone, Hecate, Circe, Medusa, Diana, Kālī, and the Melanesian Hainuwele, Rabia, and Satena. This archetypal figure has been shown to be related to woman, death, sexuality, food, the pig, the moon, the fertility of the womb, and magic. This counter process has to be directed towards a positive matriarchal consciousness. Matriarchal consciousness recognizes the spiritual significance of this aspect of the archetype, understanding that the underworld goddess leads to transformation through death. It sees that death is part of the great cycle and that the Kore maiden bears the transformative wisdom which gives the secret of chthonic immortality in life not after death. Hainuwele and Persephone symbolize the seed which must be planted in the ground/underworld and die in order for new life to grow. Rabia and Persephone

both undergo the marriage of death, expressing the archetypal connection between death/underworld and sexuality. And these goddesses are related to dark birds, e.g., crow, owl, raven, etc., and the serpent. The motifs of death, the underworld, sexuality and the serpent are unconsciously linked in the patriarchal myth of Eden and the figure of Eve.

It would be too simplistic to identify Eve totally with the shadow feminine. While she is the predominant Christian symbol, it is a type she represents and the type is seen in other forms also. A Hellenistic relief showing a siren with wings and birds' claws also expresses this negative transformative type:

> . . . This nude female creature appears as an incubus riding on a likewise nude and evidently dreaming man; . . . She is an enchanting, seducing, orgiastic, and nightmarish form of the Feminine, whose ambivalent character for man's ego begins where the excessive power and fascination of the numinous becomes a disintegrator of consciousness, and hence is experienced as negative and destructive.[49]

Psychologically, it is the immature male who identifies himself as only phallic, an adolescent stage of development, who seen the female as castrator or siren, for she is the murderer of his phallus. He projects his own sexual desire onto her, seeing her as seductress. And at a deeper level his desire for uroboric incest, to return to the comfort of maternal unconsciousness, intensifies his terror of the feminine.

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[49]Neumann, The Great Mother, p. 146.

> The danger of free sexual relations, as symbolised in the goddess . . . lies in the possibility of their leading to total satisfaction of the instinctive desires of men and women, followed, if not by sleep, then by a state of inertia, close to nirvana, in which all will to live disappears. To put it another way, there would be a general _regressus ad uterum_, a return to true paradise in the real or imaginary protection of an ever-damp and nourishing maternal womb.[50]

It is this phallic male Christian cultural view which sees:

> . . . the unity of the Feminine, which as avid womb attracts the male and kills the phallus within itself in order to achieve satisfaction and fecundation, and which as the earth-womb of the Great Goddess, as womb of death, attracts and draws in all living things, likewise for its own satisfaction and fecundation.[51]

This sexual, death goddess is the Terrible Goddess who "rules over desire and over the seduction that leads to sin and destruction."[52] And it is she who is seen not only as Eve, but also as Lilith and as witch.

Lilith is sometimes identified as the woman created by God in the first creation story of Genesis. The usual Christian polarity of Mary as the positive feminine and Eve as the negative, is sometimes altered so that Eve is the positive and Lilith the negative feminine:

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[50] Markale, p. 100.

[51] Neumann, _The Great Mother_, p. 172. The yoga of Patañjali develops this idea of the human being proceeding towards death if the degenerative energy is not resisted by Yogic Āsanas (disciplined postures), Prāṇāyāmas (efficient and balanced breath control), and Saṃayamas (triadic mental control). Tantra adds to this a control of the male and female sexual discharges.

[52] Neumann, _The Great Mother_, p. 172.

> . . . In a patriarchal society Lilith has been driven out to make way for Eve, who therefore represents woman as seen, educated and moulded by man. But she is incomplete and lacks that dimension of Lilith in rebellion that Eve assumed when eating the apple.[53]

The negative feminine is in rebellion against patriarchal rule whether symbolized as Lilith or Eve. From the third century A. D., a story is known of the "first Eve" who was created in the same way as Adam and who quarreled for possession of herself, at which point God turned her back into dust.[54] Clearly, God did not appreciate her independent spirit. By the ninth or tenth century Lilith has become a demoness, as is seen in a midrash from the Jewish Alphabet Ben Sira:

> . . . a woman was first made for Adam from the earth (and not from his flank or rib). This was Lilith, who irritated the Lord of Creation by demanding equal rights. She argued: We (Adam and I) are equal, because we both come from the earth. Whereupon they quarreled, and Lilith, bitterly disgruntled, uttered the name of God and fled to embark on her demonic career.[55]

In other versions, she is said to have refused specifically to lie beneath Adam in the sexual act and to have escaped to the Red Sea where she mated with satyrs, minotaurs, and centaurs. By the thirteenth or fourteenth century in the Kabbalistic Zohar, Lilith is designated the Queen of the Underworld, the

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[53]Markale, pp. 155-56.

[54]Gershom G. Scholem, On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), p. 163.

[55]Scholem, p. 163.

partner of Samael, the quintessence of darkness. And in one interesting tale she even becomes the mistress of God. When God's wife, Israel's mother, has to leave Him and go into exile with Israel, God consorts with the Other, the "slave woman Lilith." Only the coming of the Messiah will bring this degrading coupling to an end, for he will kill her.[56] Lilith is seen to be independent and sexually passionate, negative qualities for a woman in the patriarchate. So Lilith is transformed from a beautiful young woman into a hideous demonness who kills newborn children, attacks males sleeping alone, causes nocturnal emissions, and interferes even in the sexual life of properly married men. In the Zohar the following ritual is given to keep Lilith from the marriage bed:

> . . . In the hour when the husband enters into union with his wife, he should turn his mind to the holiness of his Lord and say:
>
> 'Veiled in velvet--are you here?
> Loosened, loosened [be your spell]!
> Go not in and go not out!
> Let there be none of you and nothing of your part!
> Turn back, turn back, the ocean rages,
> Its waves are calling you.
> But I cleave to the holy part,
> I am wrapped in the sanctity of the King.'
>
> Then for a time he should wrap his head and his wife's head in cloths, and afterwards sprinkle his bed with fresh water.[57]

The negative feminine motifs of the underworld, death, and

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[56]Lilly Rivlin, "Lilith," Ms Magazine, Vol. I, No. 6 (December, 1972), p. 97.

[57]Scholem, p. 157.

sexuality are evident, and she is sometimes even described as a serpent, completing the archetypal pattern. Lilith represents the negative transformative feminine who is feared and secretly desired by patriarchal men who consciously look only towards the pristine Virgin Mary, the powerless but pure feminine ideal.

It is, however, in the medieval phenomenon of the witchcraze that the negative transformative feminine type was most clearly pictured and most horrifyingly persecuted. The witchcraze, which began in the thirteenth century and did not cease until the last witch burning in Europe in Poland in 1793, was at its height in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is estimated that about nine million people, mostly women, were killed as witches, by Church and judicial authorities, all of them men. The witchcraze must from the outset be distinguished from various ancient witch beliefs, such as casting spells, making storms, conversing with spirits, and sympathetic magic, which were ignored by the Church for the most part. St. Boniface, in the eighth century, declared that belief in witches and werewolves was unChristian; and Charlemagne ordered the death penalty for anyone burning witches in Saxony. In fact, a most troublesome problem for the later witchhunters was the Canon Episcopi of early canon law which stated that only infidels and pagans believed in witchcraft. A distinction must be made, then, between the "old" witchcraft which had been practiced from ancient times and the "new" demonology of the witchcraze:

> It has been argued by some speculative writers that the demonology of the sixteenth century was, in essence, a real religious system, the old pre-Christian religion of rural Europe which the new Asiatic religion of Christ had driven underground but never wholly destroyed. But this is to confuse scattered fragments of paganism with the grotesque system into which they were only long afterwards arranged. The primitive peoples of Europe, as of other continents, knew of charms and sorcery, and the concept of night-riding 'with Diana or Herodias' survived into the early Christian centuries; but the essential substance of the new demonology--the pact with Satan, the witches' Sabbat, the carnal intercourse with demons, etc.,--and the hierarchical systematic structure of the Kingdom of the Devil, are an independent product of the later Middle Ages.[58]

Trevor-Roper, the eminent modern British historian, does not argue that there is no "pre-Christian religion of rural Europe," but that it is different from demonology. He does not investigate the nature of the old witchcraft, which it is indeed difficult to do for almost all written materials of the persecuted people were destroyed by the Christian Inquisitors. It will be argued here that the "old" witchcraft represents a continuing tradition of early matriarchal cult practices focusing on worship of the Goddess. The "new" witchcraft of demonology represents a Christian shadow projection of the negative transformative feminine type onto many positive transformative people, i.e., priestesses, sorcerors, enchantresses, mystics, and ecstatics. The writer mentions these details not as a mere description but to indicate how a wrong cultural process can

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58H. R. Trevor-Roper, "Witches and Witchcraft," Encounter XXVIII, No. 5 (1967), pp. 14-15.

be fostered if the right track is not discerned.

Widely varying theories have been suggested as to the origin, "real" nature, and reason behind the witchcraze; and since the witchcraze was such a widely spread and enduring phenomenon it must have been the result of varying causes. Trevor-Roper argues that the mythology of the witchcraze is an articulation of social pressure, a kind of social scapegoating which is done by the Inquisitors on the basis of testimony from the accused "witches" under torture. He identifies the witch and the Jew as stereotypes of the enemy of Christian society, the witch replacing the Jew after 1450 as the main object of persecution.[59] A second type of theory describes witchcraft as a fantasy of neurotic, insane, or aberrated minds, a mix of conventional hysteria and private hallucination.

> . . . Just as psychopathic individuals in those years [early modern Europe], centered their separate fantasies (or, as the seventeenth-century doctors would say, their 'melancholy') on the Devil, and thus gave an apparent objective identity to all their subjective experiences, so societies in fear articulated their collective neuroses about the same obsessive figure, and found a scapegoat for their fears in his agents, the witches.[60]

This process is not, then, an individual neurosis; it is a mass neurosis that haunted certain aspects of Christianity for centuries. A third type of theory points out that demonology

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[59]Trevor-Roper, p. 12. Until the scapegoating of the Jew in the second World War.

[60]H. R. Trevor-Roper, "Witches and Witchcraft II," Encounter XXVIII, No. 6 (1967), p. 23.

is an inseparable part of the medieval pseudo-Aristotelian Catholic cosmology. In the patriarchal view of separated polarities, a Kingdom of the Devil must oppose the Kingdom of God. The witches were originally persecuted by the Dominicans as heretics, and were variously identified as Albigensians, Manicheans, Catharists, Waldenses, and Vaudois.[61] A fourth theory suggests that witchcraft was the product of powerless, oppressed people, mostly women, who turned to black magic in order to attain their ends and for revenge. And a fifth theory would suggest that witches are the descendents of priestesses of a Stone Age religion, initiated into the ancient teaching:

> . . . My own theory is that it is a Stone Age cult of the matriarchal times, when woman was the chief; at a later time man's god became dominant, but the woman's cult because of the magical secrets, continued as a distinct order.[62]

Were witches cultural and political revolutionaries, matriarchs and amazons come to do battle with the Church? Were they wealthy, powerful women whose property was coveted? Were they beautiful women whose sexuality was feared and despised and desired by a celibate clergy? Were they mentally ill, political scapegoats, malevolent practioners of black magic, Christian

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[61]Trevor-Roper, "Witches and Witchcraft," p. 9

[62]Gerald B. Gardner, Witchcraft Today (London: Arrow Books Ltd., 1966), p. 48. Perhaps the ideas implied in these statements contain the germs of a real developmental process, which this writer is trying to discover through examination of the Christian view of the feminine, which ignores the fundamental experiences of the Archetypal Feminine.

heretics, or priestesses of the ancient Goddess? Certainly, among the nine million witches put to death there must be examples of each.

The "new" demonology was formulated in the 1480's in two basic documents. The Witch Bull, Summis Desiderantes Affectbus, of Pope Innocent VIII in December 1484 authorizes the Dominican monks and Inquisitors Heinrich Institor (Krämer) and Jakob Sprengler to extirpate witchcraft in Germany, as they had been doing in the Alps and Pyrenees. They then wrote the Malleus Maleficarum, "Hammer of Witches," in 1486, in which they articulate the demonological mythology. They describe not only the nature and signs of witchcraft, but methods for examining, trying, and judging witches. The tone of the treatise is evident in the following excerpt:

> . . . it has never yet been known that an innocent person has been punished on suspicion of witchcraft, there is no doubt that God will never permit such a thing to happen.[63]

Witches were said to be unable to cry, to have insensible places on their bodies, to float in water (hence the much-used "cold water" test, i.e., throw a witch in the water, if she drowns, she is innocent; if she floats, she is guilty), to make people love or hate each other, to transfer disease from one person to another, to practice sympathetic magic with wax images, to cause men to be possessed by demons, and to raise

[63]Heinrich Krämer and James Sprengler, Malleus Maleficarum, trans. Montague Summers (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971), p. 136.

storms or tempests:

> . . . They see in them depraved human beings, chiefly women, who made a covenant with the Devil for the purpose of inflicting, with his help and the use of various magic nostrums, all sorts of injuries to their fellow men's body, life, possessions, domestic animals, crops and fruit; human beings who participated in the nocturnal Sabbat presided over by the Devil, who appeared in the flesh and to whom they paid homage; who shamelessly renounced and disgracefully derided Christ, the Church, and the sacraments; who, with the Devil's help, flew swiftly through the air to this Sabbat and to the places of their harmful activities and who committed sexual excesses of the worst kind among themselves and with the Devil; who formed a huge sect of heretics; who, finally, could easily change into animals, especially wolves, cats, or mice, and who appeared in this form to their fellow humans.[64]

Witches can make women infertile and men impotent. They can take away the penis as though it were "torn" from the body. They can change people into animals (as Circe could) and kill babies in the womb. They had six major ways of injuring people:

> . . . And one is, to induce an evil love in a man for a woman, or in a woman for a man. The second is to plant hatred or jealousy in anyone. The third is to bewitch them so that a man cannot perform the genital act with a woman, or conversely a woman with a man; or by various means to procure an abortion, as has been said before. The fourth is to cause some disease in any of the human organs. The

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[64]Joseph Hansen, "Zauberwahn, Inquisition und Hexenprozess im Mittelalter," trans. J. H. Heldt, European Witchcraft, ed. E. William Monter (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1969), pp. 5-6.

> fifth to take away life. The sixth, to deprive them of reason.[65]

This all has to do with sexuality, madness, and death; clearly the work of the negative transformative feminine type, or so the demonologists saw it. These acquisitions of power presuppose, however, the kind of knowledge of the Tantric yogic practices which work with energy controls as indicated previously by the writer.

The preoccupation of demonology with sexuality is tragically obvious when it is remembered that most of the victims were women and all of the official persecutors were men. But it is still sometimes surprising to read the Malleus' long controversies about the Devil's capacity as a lover, describing in detail what might be called his bisexual capacity to alternate as a succubus to male witches and incubus to female witches.[66] There is a kind of demonizing of sexuality, particularly female sexuality, which makes clear the Church's basic assumption that sexuality is never a vehicle for love, which is only spiritual.[67] The Malleus reiterates:

> . . . Witches, as has been said, so inflame the minds of men with unlawful lust that they are compelled to travel long distances in the night to go to their mistresses, being too fast bound in the net of carnal desire.[68]

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[65]Kramer, p. 115. [66]Kramer, p. 112.

[67]Eleanor Como McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Woman in Medieval Theology," Religion and Sexism, ed. Rosemary Ruether (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), pp. 229-30.

[68]Kramer, p. 133.

This interrelationship in Christianity of sexuality, the feminine, death, the underworld, and evil, and the intense separation from and persecution of these elements must not, however, be limited to the witchcraze. It is a recurrent phenomenon in Christianity:

> Anyone who supposes that the absurd and disgusting details of demonology are unique may profitably look at the allegations made by St. Clement of Alexandria against the followers of Carpocrates in the second century A.D., or by St. Epiphanius against the Gnostic heretics of the fourth century A.D., or by St. Augustine against certain Manichaean heretics--or, indeed, at the remarks of Tacitus on the early Christians or of the orthodox Catholics on the Albigensians and Vaudois of the twelfth century and the Fraticelli of the fourteenth. In these recurrent fantasies the obscene details are often identical, and their identity sheds some light on the psychological connection between persecuting orthodoxy and sexual prurience. The springs of sanctimony and sadism are not far apart.[69]

One cause of this recurrent phenomenon is neglect of the Archetypal Feminine.

Having briefly discussed the nature of medieval Christian demonology as a shadow projection of the negative transformative feminine archetype, it is important to look at the people who received that projection, and at their relationship to the feminine. There is evidence of a religious cult which existed in its own right prior to Christianity, whose members were called the 'wica,' wise ones. Material documentation is difficult to find, since the Inquisitors destroyed all the

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[69]Trevor-Roper, "Witches and Witchcraft," p. 20, footnote.

documents of the witches which they found, leaving only their conclusions made on the basis of testimony given under torture. Authentic witchcraft was, and remains today, a secret religion which keeps its teachings and practices to itself, understandably. However, Charles Leland, the president of the first European Folk-lore Congress in 1899, discovered a text which appears to have originated about 1400 A. D., entitled, Aradia, The Gospel of Witches.[70] This is contemporary with the trial evidence compiled by Margaret Murray, who delineates "ritual" witchcraft (as opposed to black magic) as the survival in Christian Europe of a very ancient fertility cult based in worship of Diana.[71] The main beliefs of the witches documented in these two sources may be summarized in the following way:

> . . . The great deity who made the universe and ordered the lives of men was female. She was Diana who, to the Greek world, was known as Artemis. Diana was at first invisible, but she created light in the form of a male consort, Lucifer. He was represented by the Sun, the greatest light known to men. Diana, as queen of heaven and darkness, was represented by the greatest object in the night sky, the moon. A child of the union of Light and Darkness was Magic and was known as Aradia. Aradia was sent to earth to teach this art to mankind.[72]

70Charles G. Leland, Aradia, The Gospel of the Witches (New York: Buckland Museum, 1968).

71Margaret Murray, The Witch Cult in Western Europe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921).
Margaret Murray, The God of the Witches (London: Sampson Low, 1931).

72T. C. Lethbridge, Witches (New York: Citadel Press, 1962), pp. 13-14. Diana and Aradia parallel the Vedic goddess Uṣas, Dawn, representing the twilight zone after the end of the darkness of night before sunrise.

Diana or Tana, her Etruscan name, was the queen of witches. From a brother-sister union, characteristic of matriarchal society, e.g., the Egyptian Pharoahs, a daughter Aradia or Herodias was born, who was the Messiah of the witch cult. Her mission was to become mortal and teach to people the secrets of magic power and the arts of poisoning and crop blasting so they could free themselves from their oppressors. Another version of the creation myth describes Diana as the first darkness who divided herself into darkness and light. Her other half was her brother, Lucifer, "the light," who was so beautiful that she desired him and this desire was Dawn. She seduced him, by assuming the form of a cat, and produced Aradia. The identification of the first goddess with darkness is archetypal and has been symbolized since the Neolithic era, e.g., the goddess Nyx. The relationship between Diana and the moon is archetypal and has specifically been shown in Artemis, Isis, Ishtar, Hecate, Devī, etc. It is the dark aspect of the moon, which is related to the underworld goddesses, Hecate, Persephone, Medusa. These goddesses are also related to magic and have the ability to change into animal forms, e.g., the cat, dog, hare, horse, and pig in particular. When Aradia left the earth she gave instructions as to how to worship her mother, Diana: they were to meet once a month at the full moon, naked, symbolizing their freedom, and worship with singing, dancing, feasting, and ritual mating. The connection between the moon, food, sexuality, and fertility expressed here is archetypally consistent with the transformative feminine

type. It is not surprising that the Church associated these motifs with its negative valuation of the feminine, judged them evil, and associated them with death and the underworld; although this is undoubtedly a regressive movement, according to the present writer.

The goddess Diana was also said to have had love affairs with the giant Orion, Endymion, and the nature god Pan, pictured with a horned head and goat legs. The horned head and goat legs are part of the medieval symbol of Satan, the witches' lover. The god Baal at Carthage was a horned god and is related to the Celtic Balor, Beli, and Beelzebub, for all these names mean "the Lord." Lucifer, the Celtic Lugh, and the Roman "Lux," all mean "the Light," so, since these names are all titles, they may refer to the same deity, the horned Lord of Death and the Underworld, who prepares one for rebirth and is Diana's consort.[73] The witches' testimonies speak of a horned male leader whom the Inquisitors identify as the devil, but they do not speak of a goddess. However, even today witches do not speak her name because of the magical power inherent in a name; and besides, the torturers did not ask about a female leader.

Various other archetypal motifs which appear in the witch cult may be briefly mentioned. Hecate, goddess of storms, destruction, and the terrors of the night, was said to

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[73] Lethbridge, p. 35.

lead witches flying about at night. The willow tree appears as a linking motif, for in Greece it was "sacred to Hecate, Circe, Hera, and Persephone, all Death aspects of the Triple Moon goddess, and much worshipped by witches."[74] Witches were related with various animals, particularly the dog, Hecate's animal, the hare of the Moon Goddess, and the horse. At the witch trials testimony was given that witches mated with a man disguised as a horse, reminiscent of Demeter's rape by Poseidon in a horse form, and of Epona, the horse goddess of the Gauls. Witches were said to have extra teats on their bodies with which they fed their animal familiars, reminiscent of the statue at Ephesus of Artemis with many breasts, like an animal mother. Diana was said to give the witches the ability to understand animal language as well as the healing properties of herbs, showing the elementary mother's connection with the natural world. Witch charms were often placed over or under the door of a house, reflecting the goddess' role as gate or doorway. Ritual dancing was done nude because the witches believed that power resides in the body which can be released by dancing in a circle, a feminine shape, and singing or reciting incantations which would induce an ecstatic state, and this power would be impeded by clothing.[75] This positive valuation of the body is parallel to Tantric teaching of the sacred nature of sexuality, in which the body

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[74]Graves, p. 173. [75]Gardner, p. 20.

is seen as a direct manifestation of the Divine Mother. Other parallels with Tantra include the use of incantation or mantram, worship of the goddess, the presence of priestesses or the yogini, the secret or inner nature of the teaching, and the shadow roles that both cults played in their cultures. This is a step towards a cross-cultural development from the Vedic Uṣas (Dawn) of Aradia to the complex Tantric concept of yoginī, of female consorts.

> . . . The worship of Diana, or Artemis, is a development of this Great Mother belief and this is at the root of the religion of witches.[76]

The final significant motif to be discussed here is the serpent imagery related to the underworld goddesses and to the witches. The archetypal relation between woman and the serpent, which in the Melanesian myth of Hina and Te Tuna is positive, is negative in Christianity, which symbolizes original sin in medieval art by an image of Eve and the serpent. Eve is said to have become the slave of the serpent, but Mary shattered his strength and power. A Premonstratensian statute of the late thirteenth century explains that it closed its monastic doors to women because of the fact that:

> . . . the iniquity of women surpasses all iniquities which are in the world, and that there is no wrath greater than the wrath of a woman, that the poisons of vipers and dragons are healthier and less harmful for men than familiarity with women . . . we shall receive under no condition any more sisters for the increase of our perdition, but rather we shall avoid accepting them as if poisonous beasts.[77]

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[76]Lethbridge, p. 74. [77]McLaughlin, pp. 242-43.

A native Gallic myth speaks of Melusine, who is half snake and half woman; and the second-century gnostic Book of Baruch, by Justinus, describes the birth of Paradise and Adam from the union of Elohim and Edem, who is Israel and the earth and is pictured as half snake and half virgin. The European Triple Goddess' lover was the Serpent of Wisdom and her son was the Star of Life called Lucifer or Phosphorus, the "bringer of light."[78]

Serpents were related to the underworld because of their ability to slough their skin and thus be reborn, because they live underground, and are cold-blooded and secretive. Hecate was pictured sometimes as partly snake in form or, like Medusa, with snakes in her hair. This is all reflected in the *Malleus* when it is stated that the reason for the witches' power over sexuality is that:

> . . . God allows them more power over this act, by which the first sin was disseminated, than over other human actions. Similarly they have more power over serpents, which are the most subject to the influence of incantations, than over other animals.[79]

But perhaps the best, and most tragically amusing, example of the unconscious connection between witches, male sexual fears, and the Serpent Goddess is seen in a story told of a woman's activities as a witch, on the basis of which she was burned:

> . . . And what, then, is to be thought of those witches who in this way sometimes collect male organs in great numbers, as many as twenty or thirty members together, and put them in a

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[78]Graves, p. 387. [79]Kramer, p. 118.

> bird's nest, or shut them up in a box, where they move themselves like living members, and eat oats and corn, as has been seen by many and is a matter of common report? . . . For a certain man tells that, when he had lost his member, he approached a known witch to ask her to restore it to him. She told the afflicted man to climb a certain tree, and that he might take which he liked out of a nest in which there were several members. And when he tried to take a big one, the witch said: 'You must not take that one'; adding, because it belonged to a parish priest.[80]

This writer has referred to these details to indicate that due to the Judeo-Christian neglect of the Archetypal Feminine there has been the emergence and development of a mass of abnormalities or compensatory processes which have caused untold suffering and demand correction. The various archetypal motifs which could be symbolically construed and give a transformative value have been interpreted for political reasons, to please certain people, males, in power and to support patriarchal consciousness. This has in turn caused a devaluation of the feminine and a distortion of the human and Divine nature.

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[80]Kramer, p. 121.

Chapter 10

CONCLUSION

The fundamental aim of this study has been to bring the feminine archetype to consciousness through articulation and expression of the symbols and myths of various religious systems. In Western religion only masculine symbols of the Divine have become conscious and so an unconscious identification between the masculine and the Divine has arisen. An underlying hope of this study has been that through articulation of the feminine symbols of the Divine this misidentification can be broken and the transsexual nature of the Divine can show through. For when the masculine alone is identified with the Divine then an unbalanced consciousness arises which focuses on opposition and the separation of polarities and which identifies the feminine with the non-divine or evil. As it is symbolized in the heavens so humanity manifests it on earth, and patriarchal religion is both reflective of and helps to reenforce the biases of patriarchal culture. It is not accidental that the Christian churches have been one of the most powerful agents in the suppression of women in the world. One remedy to this unbalanced situation, then, is to focus on the repressed feminine consciousness and allow Her to emerge and express Herself.

> . . . The archetypal roles are distributed by the identification of the upward-striving consciousness with the male and of the regressive, devouring, dangerous unconscious with the female. It is the projection of this symbolic sexual quality upon the men or the women that determines the social and religious position of the sexes until the psychological significance of the symbols has become conscious.[1]

Through articulation of the feminine symbols in both their positive and negative aspects, the psychological significance of the symbols can become conscious, and being recognized on the symbolic level, can be withdrawn from the cultural projection of reality. It is for this reason that this writer has focused on the insights of the depth psychology of Jung and Neumann in particular. The final chapter of this dissertation, then, will focus on a brief summary of the archetypal nature of the feminine, what has happened to the feminine as it has been seen in Western Judeo-Christian culture and what can be done to redress this unbalanced situation.

Who is She? The feminine archetype represents the primordial productivity of the unconscious which is manifested as the womb and symbolized as the Great Mother. The Great Mother expresses the Divine as that which conceives, bears, gives birth to, and nourishes the universe which is contained within Her womb, the Great Round. She answers the question of whether there is ultimately one or many, as the Mother (one) who gives birth to all phenomena (many). She is the Goddess

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[1]Erich Neumann, The Great Mother, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 178.

of Many Names, the one reality although called by many names, for every individual manifest being looks at Her from a different perspective and calls Her by a different name. As one She appears to be many through the power of birth, of life creation; and through the power of illusion, māyā, She makes each appearance seem separate. She is the Great Multiplier. From primordial times She is the Naked Goddess, worshipped in Her very being, for Her physical form symbolizes the ultimate mystery of life, the womb which gives birth, the breasts which nourish, and the mouth which devours. She is exposed and yet eternally mysterious, benign and yet destroying, giving in birth and taking in death, for She expresses the entire life process, which includes destruction and decay as well as creation and growth.

She is the Goddess of Birth and Death, womb and tomb, the double-aspected goddess who contains all polarities within her transformative womb-kiln.

> . . . Man would do well to heed the wise counsel of the mother and obey the inexorable law of nature which sets limits to every being. He ought never to forget that the world exists only because opposing forces are held in equilibrium.[2]

She maintains the relativity of all opposites, since She contains both. And She expresses them in the rhythm of cyclical change, as seen in the seasons of nature and the phases of the moon. Good and evil are always relative terms

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[2]Carl Gustav Jung, Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Collected Works, Vol. 9, I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 94.

for each phenomenon generates its opposite as the background which defines it. So She must be known through every object, feeling, and experience, excluding nothing. She creates out of Her very being; all matter is Her flesh; and all the forms which matter takes are direct manifestations of Herself. Therefore, She values the body, world, matter, and change. Not fearing death, She has no need to shrink from birth, and the constant interchange of opposites, pleasure-pain, agony-ecstasy, is Her dance, Her game with which She delights those who know Her true nature. For She is the dynamic energy which flows through and creates this world.

She is the transformative goddess of wisdom who gives the insight and inspiration to Her children which urges, draws, lures, seduces, fascinates, and invites them to flow in tune with Her natural rhythms. As the moon, She teaches that one grows and decays, waxes and wanes, disappearing entirely only to be reborn. As the seed, She teaches that one must die and descend into the underworld/unconscious, fully surrendering the seed form in order to be transformed into food or flower. She shows the way through death and it is into and through the darkness, for until one faces that which one fears the most, one can never be free. It is this very process of entering the darkness of Her māyā and Her tomb which causes the new self to be born.

> Every dark thing one falls into can be called an initiation. To be initiated into a thing means to go into it. The first step is generally falling into the dark place and usually appears in a

> dubious or negative form--falling into something, or being possessed by something. . . . Even the worst things you fall into are an effort at initiation, for you are in something which belongs to you, and now you must get out of it.[3]

She is seen in many different ways by different people and Her image continues to evolve, but always She shows the origin, the end, and the path through the darkness:

> The Archetypal Feminine in man unfolds like mankind itself. At the beginning stands the primeval goddess, resting in the materiality of her elementary character, knowing nothing but the secret of her womb; at the end is Tara, in her left hand the opening lotus blossom of psychic flowering, her right hand held out toward the world in a gesture of giving. Her eyes are half closed and in her meditation She turns toward the outward as well as the inner world: an eternal image of the redeeming female spirit. Both together form the unity of the Great Goddess who, in the totality of her unfolding, fills the world from its lowest elementary phase to its supreme spiritual transformation.[4]

Within Western Judeo-Christian culture the unity of the Goddess has been severed by the discriminating patriarchal consciousness which separates all opposites, divides all polarities. The dark is not the other side of light, but is seen as inferior, evil, and threatening to the existence of light. It therefore must be repressed, for it is an independent and ultimate power. Christianity is a monotheistic, dualistic,

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[3]Marie Louise von Franz, Problems of the Feminine in Fairytales (New York: Spring Publications, 1972), p. 64.

[4]Neumann, pp. 334-35. Neumann here refers to the Buddhist Tantric feminine principle: Tara representing the cosmic-psychic void, Sunya in relation to the masculine principle, the energy or Vajra. Without the feminine principle the masculine principle cannot be operative.

philosophical system which projects the "other" or "evil" principle onto shadow figures, e.g., devil, serpent, Eve, witches, heretics, Jews, etc., and then tries to destroy them. While this kind of suppression may have been necessary in order for consciousness to have discriminated itself from the unconscious, as Jung and others would argue, patriarchal culture has gotten stuck at this stage of development. When a god or goddess is forgotten, some aspects of the collective unconscious are so prominently in the foreground that others are ignored; and the Goddess has been ignored, devalued, and repressed. The writer, therefore, suggests a redirection of consciousness as a corrective to Christianity.

The creators of patriarchal culture have been almost exclusively male, symbolized by a male deity who alone rules the heavens. Their view of the feminine, then, has been only a male view and they have identified the anima with the entire feminine archetype. As Jung says:

> Above all, I should like to point out that the mother-image in a man's psychology is entirely different in character from a woman's. For a woman, the mother typifies her own conscious life as conditioned by her sex. But, for a man the mother typifies something alien, which he has yet to experience and which is filled with the imagery latent in the unconscious.[5]

The feminine to the male is always symbolic and this leads to a tendency to idealize or denigrate her, but not to see her as

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[5]Jung, p. 105. The writer wants to lay bare this aspect of the feminine principle as suggested by Jung.

she is. Jung says that in masculine psychology the Uranian type of mother image predominates, while in feminine psychology the chthonic or Earth-Mother type dominates. The Uranian, sky, type is an anima figure who can be identified with the Bird Goddess or Star Goddess, who becomes Mary, Queen of Heaven, whose animal is the dove, and who expresses the transformative character. The Earth-Mother is the elementary earth goddess, the Snake Goddess, whom women can identify with directly, feeling Her presence in their bodily changes. But men have denied this connection and identified Her with the dark or underworld aspect of the earth, associating Her with serpents, death, and sexuality. The patriarchy has banished Her into the darkness and covered Her with shame and disgust. It is no wonder that when She rises She is covered with filth; She is the beautiful Medusa who becomes the Gorgon, the seductive Lilith who becomes a demoness, the innocent, curious Eve who becomes the Mother of Sin. It is no wonder that patriarchal men are constantly marrying Mary and then seeking Eve for their sexual pleasures. While Eve may be wicked or shameful, Mary has no body.

> . . . For, in the words of Tertullian, 'the palace is built over the sewer,' and prostitution and pornography are as essential to good patriarchal society as the drains under its cities.[6]

The identification of sexuality with the negative feminine is

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[6]Jean Markale, Women of the Celts, trans. A. Mygind and others (London: Gordon Cremonesi Publishers, 1975), p. 102.

a part of the patriarchal view of the earth/matter/body/world. As Neumann said:

> . . . With the development of the patriarchate the Great Goddess has become the Goddess of Love, and the power of the Feminine has been reduced to the power of sexuality.[7]

Eve is the underworld goddess, and sexuality, death, the body, and evil are associated in the patriarchal mind. For the Earth Goddess was beneficient, giving Herself freely in love to Her children, but the patriarchal work society is based on a lack of libidinous gratification and civilization is built on sexual repression, as Freud and Marcuse have recognized in this century. The present writer's suggestion is, therefore, a correction of the patriarchal cultural bias, particularly as seen in Christianity.

The negative moral judgment which has been placed on the materiality and sexuality of the feminine has led to the view that materiality leads only to death, negative elementary, and sexuality leads only to disintegration and the madness of lust, negative transformative. But it has been shown that the negative transformative goddesses, e.g., Medusa, Hecate, Circe, etc., are also the givers of prophecy, inspiration, and illumination. The extreme negative transformative experience of madness is hardly separated from the extreme positive transformative experience of ecstasy. One must be willing to risk madness in order to experience ecstasy. Patriarchal

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[7]Neumann, p. 145.

consciousness, in seeking to avoid the negative transformative Eve, has cut itself off from the positive transformative goddess of inspiration. And in the Christian tradition prophecy virtually ended with the Biblical period and mystics have always been viewed with suspicion by the orthodox. With the loss of the transformative feminine energy, or śakti, the Christian world view has become static, focusing on the immutability of God with His omnipotence and His providential plan. This has led to human attitudes of despair and resignation to the status quo, or angry reactions against authority or the "plan." The natural order of the Mother has been reversed and the spiritual order of the Father reigns, in which "man was not made from woman, but woman from man" (I Corinthians 11:3). In suggesting a rectification of the one-sided patriarchal bias of Christianity, the following is stated as a final position of this dissertation.

Neumann argues that the Johannine statement, "I and the Father are one" is a sacral formula by which the individual emancipates himself from domination by the Great Mother.[8] If this is so, then the formula was not effective, because Christianity seems to be dominated by the Terrible Mother. It is stuck at the phallic level of identification of the male, that is the phallus, with God. If Christianity were free, then the feminine archetype could be integrated into a holistic world view without masculine fear of being absorbed, i.e., of

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[8]Neumann, p. 203.

uroboric incest. And then both masculine and feminine qualities would be valued. The effects of domination by the Terrible Mother are most clear when Christianity is compared with the Tantra, which honors the Terrible Mother as Kālī and therefore allows Her entire nature to emerge to consciousness. In Tantra material reality is valued as Devī's own flesh, i.e., She is Prakṛti, composed of three guṇas, and sexuality may be an act of spiritual worship, i.e., the maithuna ritual. In Christianity material reality is "fallen" and sexuality is such a sinful act that Christ was born without it. In Tantra each person, as every other phenomenon, is a manifestation of the Divine Mother which emerges out of Her and dissolves back into Her, for Her forms are endless. In Christianity a soul is born and has but one chance to be saved or lost before he/she appears before the Almighty Judge, who gives either unending bliss or unending pain. In the Goddess' World nothing is unending, for birth, death, and rebirth characterize all phenomena which ebb and flow in rhythmic change. The Father's world has both a beginning and an end, within which a hierarchical order of value is absolutely decreed. The Tantric spiritual path, like the feminine, moves downward and inward to confront that which is hiding in the rejected parts of the psyche and faces that which is feared so that every aspect of the Goddess' creation may be glorified:

> The feminine style of psychic or spiritual transformation is a downward-going procedure through the transfiguration of the things that

are lowest in one's life.[9]

The Christian spiritual path is exemplified in the monastic ideal which is removed from the evil world, denying the body, instincts, and unconscious in order to move upward to the transcendent Being which alone is pure. The nature of Śakti, who is Being-Power, is Līlā, the free, spontaneous interplay or dance of opposing forces, and the Divine Mother is Lalitā, the player. The opposites in Christianity struggle against each other in a battle to the death in which only one will emerge victorious, either God or the Devil. Tantra, both Hindu and Buddhist, is advaitic, nondual, and Christianity is dualistic. The feminine in Tantra is powerful, compassionate, and all-inclusive; while the feminine in Christianity is limited by dependence on the masculine symbol and ineffectual by herself. A twentieth-century Tantric writes:

> . . . though the worship of the Mother of the universe in the image of Mary, the mother of Christ, is extant, in an obscured form, in the Catholic Christian community, it is not directly connected with the idea of God as Mother. It has, therefore, not been as fruitful as the worship of the universal Mother extant in India and has not enabled the aspirant to realize the indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute and to experience the divine manifestation in all women without exception.[10]

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[9] Ann Bedford Ulanov, The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and Christian Theology (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p. 182.

[10] Swami Saradānanda, Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master, trans. Swami Jagadānanda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1952), p. 221.

The question remains as to what can be done to rectify the unbalanced situation which patriarchal consciousness has created. The values of patriarchal religion are one-sided and rigid without the transformative power of the feminine, which teaches the relativity of all phenomena as seen in the changing moon, and the elementary power of the feminine, which teaches the cyclic union of birth and death as seen in the seasons of nature. One answer to this question lies in the symbolism of the Divine-human relationship, and ultimately of the Divine. In the medieval Christian view:

> . . . Thomas, following Aristotle, speaks of a 'friendship' between husband and wife, but it must be that of inferior to a superior, a hierarchical love comparable to the love of the soul for God.[11]

The soul, humanity, and the Church's proper relationship to God are symbolized in Mary's acquiescence to God's will. The sexual relationship is seen as a reflection of the Divine-human relationship. As recognition of contrasexuality that on the biological level, i.e., x and y chromosomes, and on the psychological level, i.e., anima and animus, occurs, then this may be expressed in personal relationships in which each person is seen as a composite of masculine and feminine aspects, forming what Jung calls an "archetypal quaternio":

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[11]Eleanor Commo McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Woman in Medieval Theology," Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed. Religion and Sexism (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), p. 229.

> . . . Feminine initiation of a new form of human relation, either through the anima in man or through woman directly, in which each person is both sexes in one and the two become one by a full exchange of contrasexuality, implies the emergence of a new vision of God in the midst of human individuality and sexuality.[12]

God may not be symbolized as masculine alone because humanity is not masculine alone, and even a male is not masculine alone. Recognition of feminine symbols of the Divine, of the Great Goddess, can allow the transsexual and bisexual nature of the Divine Reality to emerge, perhaps as the divine syzygy seen in Śiva-Śakti. And as the Divine is seen anew, the symbolic expression of male-female relationships can be revisualized and transformed.

Secondly, Mary, the feminine figure in Christianity closest to God, may be seen in her archetypal setting by freeing her from patriarchal limitations. Mary expresses both types of the positive feminine archetype, i.e., as Mother of God she is the transformative anima. She unites these two aspects as the childbearing virgin, but since her power is gone, it is an ineffectual union. If Mary could be seen as a matriarchal virgin, a woman who belongs to herself, rather than as a patriarchal virgin, a woman defined solely in respect to her sexuality, then she would not be dependent on the male. If Mary could be recognized as the matriarchal vessel which engenders and nurtures the seed of consciousness, Christ, within

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[12]Ulanov, pp. 270-71.

itself, rather than as a passive patriarchal vessel which merely waits to be filled by the masculine, then she would be powerful. If it would be recognized that Mary as the soul-image bearing consciousness does not need to give birth to herself for she does not die, it is consciousness which is born and dies, rises and passes away, then she would be seen as the Great Mother bearing her dying and rising son-lover. She would be seen as constant energy constantly taking form as consciousness. She would be the Great Goddess, the Divine Mother, not merely the Mother of God. These reformulations are not merely compensatory processes but point toward the evolving spiritual development of matriarchal consciousness.

Thirdly, and finally, the dark side of the feminine must be confronted and accepted. Even if Mary is seen as an archetypal goddess she only represents the positive feminine types. The Queen of the Underworld, the Death Mother, and Māyā-Śakti, the Mother of Delusion, are also part of the feminine archetype in its negative character. It has been shown, however, that it is the heroic consciousness which sees the Great Mother as the destroying dragon; it is the obsessed imaginings of patriarchal consciousness which have submerged the Goddess and covered Her with horrifying disguises:

> Yet she is exposed, not only to men's sarcasm, but also to their will to power, their egoism, their sense of property. It is men who have invented the woman-as-object, tricked out in endless fineries, but a prisoner just the same. Some day this woman, the goddess, the Great Queen imprisoned in the shrine, is going to shake off her chains, and her rebellion will be terrible,

> for she is a direct threat to the society that men have built without her.[13]

The witches were accused, tortured, and convicted of the obsessed imaginings of medieval men. The witches put on the projected disguises of the Inquisitioners and the terror grew, but behind these masks the primordial Goddess remained.

The key to the deluding power of Māyā is recognition of the personalizing power of the Goddess. The Divine Mother gives birth to the one spirit/reality/Śiva in personal form, and it is this personal form which is illusion. To see through the personal aspects of all personifications, to see through "my" feeling to the primal nature of feeling releases the individual from identification with the particular, thereby depersonalizing the anima.

> By returning the infusions, the beauty, the wiles and vanities to their origins in the Goddesses, giving it all back to its background, we depersonalize the entire compulsive autonomous performance.[14]

Without personal identification, feelings arise and pass away, pleasure comes, pain comes, as part of the rhythmic process of nature, which is neither good nor evil, or both good and evil. In order to do this, however, the very things an individual or culture fears the most must be confronted. The Death Mother must be faced in one's personal depressions, fears, anxieties, and hopelessness; and in the culture's war machine, napalm

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[13]Markale, p. 146.

[14]James Hillman, "Anima," (II), Spring 1974 (New York: Spring Publications, 1974), p. 123.

attacks, and degradation of the poor and racially different. The Deluding Mother must be faced in the fantasies of racial or sexual superiority as well as in the prurient fantasies of sexual desire which have been projected onto women.

Women, particularly, must recognize and embrace what patriarchal consciousness has judged evil and degraded, for in this embracing the power of the feminine is to be found. As Judith Plaskow Goldenberg has suggested in "Epilogue: The Coming of Lilith,"[15] perhaps the time is coming in which Eve and Lilith will meet and talk and discover that they are sisters, separated only by the fearful fantasies of Adam and Yahweh God. And together Eve and Lilith will be powerful. Or, as the twentieth-century American feminist group WITCH writes:

> . . . If you are a woman and dare to look within yourself, you are a Witch . . . you are free and beautiful . . . you are a Witch by saying aloud, 'I am a Witch' three times, and <u>thinking about that</u>. You are a Witch by being female, untamed, angry, joyous, and immortal.[16]

In the uniting within each woman of her shadow witch-self with her virginal Mary-self, the power and life-giving energy of Śakti, the Great Goddess archetype will be freed to allow women to become passionate, independent, and powerful individuals. And then the transformative power of the Goddess which

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[15]Judith Plaskow Goldenberg, "Epilogue: The Coming of Lilith," Ruether, pp. 341-43.

[16]Robin Morgan, ed. <u>Sisterhood is Powerful</u> (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p. 540.

lurks within each being will be freed to transform men's anima and patriarchal culture itself. The Sleeping Beauty within each being will wake up and become the Queen of her Kingdom, the psyche--the completed and completing possibility.

This dissertation is not finally a disparaging of Christianity in the light of the discoveries of Jungian psychology, nor does it suggest a return to the Hindu-Buddhist Tantra where there is a recognition and development of the Archetypal Feminine principle. It is, rather, bringing to consciousness and articulation the insight of the shadow figures of patriarchal consciousness leading towards a symbolic reevaluation of the Divine which has been distorted by Christian adherence to a Father God while repressing and neglecting the place and importance of the Mother Goddess.

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